George Bernard Shaw
His Plays

BY

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PREFACE

This is a little handbook for the reading tables of Americans interested enough in the drama of the day to have some curiosity regarding the plays of George Bernard Shaw, but too busy to give them careful personal study or to read the vast mass of reviews, magazine articles, letters to the editor, newspaper paragraphs and reports of debates that deal with them. Every habitual writer now before the public, from William Archer and James Huneker to "Vox Populi" and "An Old Subscriber" has had his say about Shaw. In the pages following there is no attempt to formulate a new theory of his purposes or a novel interpretation of his philosophies. Instead, the object of this modest book is to bring all of the Shaw commentators together upon the common ground of admitted fact, to exhibit the Shaw plays as dramas rather than as transcendental treatises, and to describe their plots, characters. and general plans simply and calmly, and without reading into them anything invisible to the naked eye.

The order in which the plays are considered is not the chronological one, and some readers may think that it is not the logical one. Inasmuch as an exposition of the

reasons that urged its adoption would waste a great deal of space, the point will not be argued. The brief biography of the dramatist is based upon the most accurate available eulogies, denunciations, reminiscences, and manuscripts. So, too, the historical data regarding the plays and other publications.

The reputation of Mr. Shaw as a playwright has so far exceeded his renown as a novelist, a socialist, a cart-tail orator, a journeyman reformer, a vegetarian, and a critic of literature and the arts, that his novels and other minor works have been noticed but briefly. But this is not to be taken as evidence that they do not merit acquaintance. Even the worst of Shaw is well worth study.

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

What else is talent but a name for experience, practice, appropriation, incorporation, from the times of our forefathers?

—Friedrich Nietzsche.

A century is a mere clock-tick in eternity, but measured by human events it is a hundred long years. Napoleon Bonaparte, born in 1768, became an officer of artillery and gravedigger for an epoch. Born in 1868, he might have become a journeyman genius of the boulevards, a Franco-Yankee trust magnate, or the democratic boss of Kansas City. And so, contrariwise, George Bernard Shaw, born in 1756 instead of 1856, might have become a gold-stick-in-waiting at the Court of St. James or Archbishop of Canterbury. The accident that made him what he is was one of time. He saw the light after, instead of before Charles Darwin.

Darwin is dead now, and the public that reads the newspapers remembers him only as the person who first publicly noted the fact that men look a great deal like monkeys. But his soul goes marching on. Thomas Huxley and Herbert Spencer, like a new Ham and a new Shem, spent their lives seeing to that. From him, through Huxley, we have appendicitis, the seedless

orange, and our affable indifference to hell. Through Spencer, in like manner, we have Nietzsche, Sudermann, Hauptmann, Ibsen, our annual carnivals of catechetical revision, the stampede for church union, and the aforesaid George Bernard Shaw. Each and all of these men and things, it is true, might have appeared if Darwin were yet unborn. Ibsen might have written "A Doll's House," and a rash synod or two might have turned impertinent search-lights upon the doctrine of infant damnation. It is possible, certainly, but it is supremely, colossally, and overwhelmingly improbable.

Why? Simply because before Darwin gave the world "The Origin of Species" the fight against orthodoxy, custom, and authority was perennially and necessarily a losing one. On the side of the defense were ignorance, antiquity, piety, organization, and respectability—twelve-inch, wire-wound, rapid-fire guns, all of them. In the hands of the scattered, half-hearted, unorganized attacking parties there were but two weapons—the blowpipe of impious doubt and the bludgeon of sacrilege. Neither, unsupported, was very effective. Voltaire, who tried both, scared the defenders a bit and for a while there was a great pother and scurrying about, but when the smoke cleared away the walls were just as strong as before and the drawbridge was still up. One had to believe or be damned. There was no compromise and no middle ground.

And so, when Darwin bobbed up, armed with a new-

fangled dynamite gun that hurled shells charged with a new shrapnel—facts—the defenders laughed at the novel weapon and looked forward to slaying its bearer. Spencer, because he ventured to question Genesis, lost his best friend. Huxley, for an incautious utterance, was barred from the University of Oxford. And then of a sudden, there was a deafening roar and a blinding flash—and down went the walls. Ramparts of authority that had resisted doubts fell like hedge-rows before facts, and there began an intellectual reign of terror that swept like a whirlwind through Europe, America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. For six thousand years it had been necessary, in defending a doctrine, to show only that it was respectable or sacred. Since 1859, it has been needful to prove its truth.

It will take the perspective of centuries to reveal to us the exact metes and bounds of Darwin's influence. He himself probably gave little thought to it. His own business in life was the investigation of biological phenomena and he was too busy at that to take an interest in politics or ethics. But his new method of assailing tradition appealed to men laboring in far distant vineyards, and soon there was in progress a grand assault-at-arms that left orthodoxy and custom dying on the field. Huxley led the physicians and Spencer the metaphysicians. Every time the former overturned an old theory of matter, the latter pricked an old maxim of ethics. And so the search for the ultimate verities,

which had been a pariah hiding in cellars, like anarchism or polygamy, became the spirit of the times. Whenever custom or tradition reared one of its hydra-heads, there was a champion ready to strike it down.

The practical result of this was that seekers after the truth, growing bold with success, began attacking virtues as well as vices. And herein you will find the fundamental difference between the philosophers before Darwin and those after him. The *Spectator,* in the 'teens of the eighteenth century, inveighed against marital infidelity—an amusement counted among the scarlet sins since the days of Moses. Ibsen, a century and a half later, asked if there might not be evil, too, in unreasoning fidelity. If you pursue this little inquiry to its close, you will observe that George Bernard Shaw, in nearly all of his plays and novels, follows Ibsen rather than Addison. Sometimes he lends his ear to one of the two classes of pioneers he mentions in "The Quintessence of Ibsen," and sometimes to the other, but it is always to the pioneers. Either he is exhibiting a virtue as a vice in disguise, or exhibiting a vice as a virtue in vice's clothing. In this fact lies the excuse for considering him a world-figure. He stands in a sense as an embodiment of the *welt-geist,* which is a word invented by the Germans to designate world-spirit or tendency of the times.

By Way of Introduction

II

Popular opinion and himself to the contrary notwithstanding, Shaw is not a mere preacher. The function of the dramatist is not that of the village pastor. He has no need to exhort, nor to call upon his hearers to come to the mourners' bench. All the world expects him to do is to picture human life as he sees it, as accurately and effectively as he can. Like the artist in color, form, or tone, his business is with impressions. A man painting an Alpine scene endeavors to produce, not a mere record of each rock and tree, but an impression upon the observer like that he would experience were he to stand in the artist's place and look upon the snow-capped crags. In music it is the same. Beethoven set out, with melody and harmony, to arouse the emotions that stir us upon pondering the triumphs of a great conqueror. Hence the Eroica Symphony. Likewise, with curves and color, Millet tried to awaken the soft content that falls upon us when we gaze across the fields at eventide and hear the distant vesper-bell—and we have "The Angelus."

The purpose of the dramatist is identical. If he shows us a drunken man on the stage it is because he wants us to experience the disgust or amusement or envy that wells up in us on contemplating such a person in real life. He concerns himself, in brief, with things as he sees them. The preacher deals with things as he thinks

they ought to be. Sometimes the line of demarcation between the two purposes may be but dimly seen, but it is there all the same. If a play has what is known as a moral, it is the audience and not the playwright that formulates and voices it. A sermon without an obvious moral, well rubbed in, would be no sermon at all.

And so, if we divest ourselves of the idea that Shaw is trying to preach some rock-ribbed doctrine in each of his plays, instead of merely setting forth human events as he sees them, we may find his dramas much easier of comprehension. True enough, in his prefaces and stage directions, he delivers himself of many wise saws and elaborate theories. But upon the stage, fortunately, prefaces and stage directions are no longer read to audiences, as they were in Shakespeare's time, and so, if they are ever to discharge their natural functions, the Shaw dramas must stand as simple plays. Some of them, alackaday! bear this test rather badly. Others, such as " Mrs. Warren's Profession " and " Candida," bear it supremely well.

It is the dramatist's business, then, to record the facts of life as he sees them, that philosophers and moralists (by which is meant the public in meditative mood) may deduce therefrom new rules of human conduct, or observe and analyze old rules as they are exhibited in the light of practice. That the average playwright does not always do so with absolute accuracy is due to the fact that he is merely a human being. No two men

see the same thing in exactly the same way, and there are no fixed standards whereby we may decide whether one or the other or neither is right.

Herein we find the element of individual color, which makes one man's play differ from another man's, just as one artist's picture of a stretch of beach would differ from another's. A romancist, essaying to draw a soldier, gave the world Don Cesar de Bazan. George Bernard Shaw, at the same task, produced Captain Bluntschli. Don Cesar is an idealist and a hero; Bluntschli is a sort of refined day laborer, bent upon earning his pay at the least possible expenditure of blood and perspiration. Inasmuch as no mere man—not even the soldier under analysis himself—could ever hope to pry into a fighting man's mind and define and label his innermost shadows of thought and motive with absolute accuracy, there is no reason why we should hold Don Cesar to be a more natural figure than Captain Bluntschli. All that we can demand of a dramatist is that he make his creation consistent and logical and, as far as he can see to it, true. If we examine Bluntschli we will find that he answers these requirements. There may be a good deal of Shaw in him, but there is also some of Kitchener and more of Tommy Atkins.

This is one of the chief things to remember in studying the characters in the Shaw plays. Some of them are not obvious types, but a little inspection will show that most of them are old friends, simply viewed from a new

angle. This personal angle is the possession that makes one dramatist differ from all others.

III

Sarcey, the great French critic, has shown us that the essence of dramatic action is conflict. Every principal character in a play must have a complement, or as it is commonly expressed, a foil. In the most primitive type of melodrama, there is a villain to battle with the hero and a comic servant to stand in contrast with the tearful heroine. As we go up the scale, the types are less strongly marked, but in every play that, in the true sense, is dramatic, there is this same balancing of characters and action. Comic scenes are contrasted with serious ones and for every Hamlet you will find a grave-digger.

In the dramas of George Bernard Shaw, which deal almost wholly with the current conflict between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, it is but natural that the characters should fall broadly into two general classes—the ordinary folks who represent the great majority, and the iconoclasts, or idol-smashers. Darwin made this war between the faithful and the scoffers the chief concern of the time, and the sham-smashing that is now going on, in all the fields of human inquiry, might be compared to the crusades that engrossed the world in the

middle ages. Everyone, consciously or unconsciously, is more or less directly engaged in it, and so, when Shaw chooses conspicuous fighters in this war as the chief characters of his plays, he is but demonstrating his comprehension of human nature as it is manifested to-day. In "Man and Superman," for instance, he makes John Tanner, the chief personage of the drama, a rabid adherent of certain very advanced theories in social philosophy, and to accentuate these theories and contrast them strongly with the more old-fashioned ideas of the majority of persons, he places Tanner among men and women who belong to this majority. The effect of this is that the old notions and the new—orthodoxy and heterodoxy—are brought sharply face to face, and there is much opportunity for what theater goers call "scenes" —*i. e.* clashes of purpose and will.

In all of the Shaw plays—including even the farces, though here to a less degree—this conflict between the worshipers of old idols and the iconoclasts, or idol-smashers, is the author's chief concern. In "The Devil's Disciple" he puts the scene back a century and a half because he wants to exhibit his hero's doings against a background of particularly rigid and uncompromising orthodoxy, and the world has moved so fast since Darwin's time that such orthodoxy scarcely exists to-day. Were it pictured as actually so existing the public would think the picture false and the playwright would fail in the first business of a maker of plays, which is to give

an air of reality to his creations. So Dick Dudgeon, in "The Devil's Disciple" is made a contemporary of George Washington, and the tradition against which he struggles seems fairly real.

In each of the Shaw plays you will find a sham-smasher like Dick. In "Mrs. Warren's Profession," there are three of them—Mrs. Warren herself, her daughter Vivie and Frank Gardner. In "You Never Can Tell" there are the Clandons; in "Arms and the Man" there is Bluntschli, and in "Man and Superman" there are John Tanner and Mendoza, the brigand chief, who appears in the Hell scene as the Devil. In "Candida" and certain other of the plays it is somewhat difficult to label each character distinctly, because there is less definition in the outlines and the people of the play are first on one side and then on the other, much after the fashion of people in real life. But in all of the Shaw plays the necessary conflict is essentially one between old notions of conduct and new ones.

Dramatists of other days, before the world became engaged in its crusade against error and sham, depicted battles of other sorts. In "Hamlet" Shakespeare showed the prince in conflict with himself, and in "The Merchant of Venice" he showed Shylock combatting Antonio, or, in other words, the ideals of the Jew at strife with Christian ideals of charity and mercy. Of late, the most important plays have much resembled those of Shaw. Ibsen, except in his early poetical

dramas, deals chiefly with the war between new schemes of human happiness and old rules of conduct. Nora Helmer fights the ancient idea that a married woman should love, honor and obey her husband, no matter what the provocation to do otherwise, just as Mrs. Warren defies the mandate that a woman should preserve her virtue, no matter how much she may suffer thereby. Sudermann, in "Magda," shows his heroine in revolt against the patriarchal German doctrine that a father's authority over his children is without limit, and Hauptmann, another German of rare talents, depicts his chief characters in similar situations. Shaw is frankly a disciple of Ibsen, but he is far more than a mere imitator. In some things, indeed—such, for instance, as in fertility of wit and invention—he very greatly exceeds the Norwegian.

IV

As long as a dramatist is faithful to his task of depicting human life as he sees it, it is of small consequence whether the victory, in the dramatic conflict, goes to the one side or the other. In Pinero's play, "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," the heroine loses her battle with convention and her life pays the forfeit. In Ibsen's "Ghosts," the contest ends with the destruction of all concerned; in Hauptmann's "Friedensfest"

there is no conclusion at all, and in Sudermann's "Johnnisfeuer," orthodox virtue triumphs. The dramatist, properly speaking, is not concerned about the outcome of the struggle. All he is required to do is to draw the two sides accurately and understandingly and to show the conflict naturally. In other words, it is not his business to decide the matter for his audience, but to make those who see his play think it out for themselves.

"Here," he says, as it were, "I have set down certain human transactions and depicted certain human beings brought face to face with definite conditions, and I have tried to show them meeting these conditions as persons of their sort would meet them in real life. I have endeavored, in brief, to exhibit a scene from life as real people live it. Doubtless, there are lessons to be learned from this scene—lessons that may benefit real men and women if they are ever confronted with the conditions I have described. It is for you, my friends, to work out these lessons for yourselves, each according to his ideas of right and wrong."

That Shaw makes such an invitation in each of his plays is very plain. The proof lies in the fact that they have, as a matter of common knowledge, caused the public to do more thinking than the dramas of any other contemporary dramatist, with the sole exception of Ibsen. Pick up any of the literary monthlies and you will find a disquisition upon his technique, glance through the dramatic column of your favorite newspa-

per and you will find some reference to his plays. Go to your woman's club, O gentle reader! and you will hear your neighbor, Mrs. McGinnis, deliver her views upon "Candida." Pass among any collection of human beings accustomed to even rudimentary mental activity —and you will hear some mention, direct or indirect, and some opinion, original or cribbed, of or about the wild Irishman. All of this presupposes thinking, somewhere and by somebody. Mrs. McGinnis' analysis of Candida's soul may be plagiarized and in error, but it takes thinking to make errors, and the existence of a plagiarist always proves the existence of a plagiaree. Even the writers of reviews in the literary monthlies, and the press agents who provide discourses upon "You Never Can Tell" for the provincial dailies are thinkers, strange as the idea, at first sight, may seem. And so we may take it for granted that Shaw tries to make us think and that he succeeds.

V

"My task," said Joseph Conrad the other day, in discussing the aims of the novelist, "is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel —it is, before all, to make you *see*. That—and no more. . . ."

"All that I have composed," said Hendrik Ibsen, in

an address to the Ladies' Club of Christiania, "has not proceeded from a conscious tendency. I have been more the poet and less the social philosopher than has been believed. . . . Not alone those who write, but also those who read, compose, and very often they are more full of poetry than the poet himself. . . ."

"The poet," said Schopenhauer, "brings pictures of life and human character and situations before the imagination, sets everything in motion and leaves it to every-one to think into these pictures as much as his intellectual power will find for him therein."

Let us suppose, for instance, that "Mrs. Warren's Profession" is given a performance and that 2000 average citizens pay to see it. Of the 2000 it is probable that 1900 will be persons who accept unquestioningly and without even a passing doubt the legal and ecclesiastical maxim that the Magdalen was a sinner, whom mercy might save from her punishment but not from her sin. A thousand, perhaps, will sit through the play without progressing any further; it will appeal to them merely as an entertainment and those who are not vastly delighted by its salaciousness, will condemn its immorality. But the 900, let us say, will slowly awaken to the strange fact that there is something to be said against as well as for the ancient maxim. Eight hundred of them, perhaps, after debating the matter in their minds, will decide that the arguments for it overwhelm those against it, and one hundred will leave the playhouse

convinced to the contrary or in more or less doubt. But the eight hundred, though they have left harboring the same opinion that was theirs before they came, will have made an infinite step forward. Instead of being unthinking endorsers of a doctrine they have never even examined, they will have become, in the true sense, original thinkers. Thereafter, when they condemn the Magdalen, it will be, not because a hundred popes did so before them, but because on hearing her defense, they found it unconvincing.

In this will be seen the truth of the statement purposely reiterated: that Shaw is in no sense a preacher. His private opinions, very naturally, greatly color his plays, but his true purpose, like that of every dramatist worth while, is to give a more or less accurate and unbiased picture of some phase of human life, that persons observing it may be led to speculate and meditate upon it. In "Widowers' Houses" he attempts, by setting forth a series of transactions between a given group of familiar Englishmen, to show that capitalism, as a social force, is responsible for the oppression that slum landlords heap upon their tenants, and that, in consequence, every other man of the capitalistic class, no matter what his own particular investments and activities may be, shares, to a greater or less extent, in the landlords' offense. A capitalist reading this play may conclude with some justice that the merit of husbanding money—or, as Adam Smith calls it, the virtue of ab-

stinence—outweighs his portion of the burden of this sin, or that it is, in a sense, inevitable and so not properly a sin at all; but whatever his conclusion, if he has honestly come to it after a consideration of the facts, he is a far better man than when he accepted the maxims of the majority unquestioningly and without analysis.

A preacher necessarily endeavors to make all his hearers think exactly as he does. A dramatist merely tries to make them think. The nature of their conclusions is of minor consequence.

VI.

That Shaw will ever become a popular dramatist, in the sense that Sardou and Pinero are popular, seems to be beyond all probability. The vogue that his plays have had of late in the United States is to be ascribed, in the main, to the yearning to appear "advanced" and "intellectual" which afflicts Americans of a certain class. The very fact that they do not understand him makes him seem worthy of admiration to these virtuously ambitious folks. Were his aims and methods obvious, they would probably vote him tiresome. As it is, a performance of "Candida" delights them as much as an entertainment by Henry Kellar, the magician, and for the same reason.

But even among those who approach Shaw more hon-

estly, there is little likelihood that he will ever grow more popular, in the current sense, than he is at present. In the first place, some of his plays are wellnigh impossible of performance in a paying manner without elaborate revision and expurgation. "Man and Superman," for instance, would require five hours if presented as it was written. And "Mrs. Warren's Profession," because of its subject-matter, will be unsuitable for a good many years to come. In the second place, Shaw's extraordinary dexterity as a wit, which got him his first hearing and keeps him before the public almost constantly to-day, is a handicap of crushing weight. As long as he exercises it, the great majority will continue to think of him as a sort of glorified and magnificent buffoon. As soon as he abandons it, he will cease to be Shaw.

The reason of this lies in the fact that the average man clings fondly to two ancient delusions: (*a*) that wisdom is always solemn, and (*b*) that he himself is never ridiculous. Shaw outrages both of these ideas, the first by placing his most searching and illuminating observations in the mouths of such persons as Frank Gardner and Sidney Trefusis, and the second by drawing characters such as Finch McComas and Roebuck Ramsden. The average spectator laughs at Frank's impertinences and at Trefusis' satire, and by gradual stages, comes to laugh at Frank and Trefusis. Beginning as comedians, they become butts. And so, conversely, McComas and Ramsden, as their opponents fall,

rise themselves. In the first act of "Man and Superman," the battle seems to be all in favor of John Tanner and so the unthinking reader concludes that Tanner is Shaw's personal spokesman and that the Tanner doctrines constitute the Shavian creed. Later on, when Tanner falls before the forces of inexorable law, this same reader is vastly puzzled and perplexed, and in the end he is left wondering what it is all about.

If he would but remember the reiterated axiom that a dramatist's purpose is to present a picture of life as he sees it, without reference to any particular moral conclusions, he would better enjoy and appreciate the play as a work of art. Playwrights of Shaw's calibre do not think it necessary to plainly label every character or to reward their heroes and kill their villains in the last act. It is utterly immaterial whether Tanner is dragged into a marriage with Ann or escapes scot free. The important thing is that the battle between the two be depicted naturally and plausibly and that it afford some tangible material for reflection.

The average citizen's disinclination to see the ridiculous side of his own pet doctrines and characteristics has been noted by Shaw in his preface to Ibsen's plays. Ibsen has drawn several characters intended to satirize the typical self-satisfied business man and tax-payer—the type greatly in the majority in the usual theater audience. These characters, very naturally, have failed utterly to impress the said gentlemen. One cannot ex-

pect a man, however keen his sense of humor, to laugh at the things he considers eminently proper and honorable. Shaw's demand that he do so has greatly restricted the size of the Shaw audience. To appreciate "The Devil's Disciple," for instance, a religious man would have to lift himself bodily from his accustomed rut of thought and look down upon himself from the same distance that separates him in his meditations from the rest of humanity. This, it is obvious, is possible only to man given to constant self-analysis and introspection —the 999th man in the thousand.

Even when the average spectator does not find himself the counterpart of a definite type in a Shaw play, he is confused by the handling of some of his ideals and ideas. No doubt the men who essayed to stone the Magdalen were infinitely astounded when the Messiah called their attention to the fact that they themselves were not guiltless. But it is precisely this establishment of new view-points that makes Shaw as an author worth the time and toil of study. In "Mrs. Warren's Profession," the heroine's picturesque fall from grace is shown in literally a multitude of aspects. We have her own antipodal changes in self-valuation and self-depreciation, we have her daughter's varying point of view, and we have the more constant judgments of Frank Gardner, his father, Crofts, and the rest. It is kaleidoscopic and puzzling, but it is not sermonizing. You pay your money and you take your choice.

VII

But even if Shaw's plays were not performed at all, he would be a world-figure in the modern drama, just as Ibsen is a world-figure and Maeterlinck another. Very frequently it happens, in literature as well as in other fields of metaphysical endeavor, that a master is unknown to the majority except through his disciples. Until Huxley began lecturing about it, no considerable number of laymen read "The Origin of Species." Fielding is not even a name to thousands who know and love Thackeray. And Adam Smith—how many citizens of to-day read "The Wealth of Nations"? Yet it is undeniable that the Scotch schoolmaster's conclusions have colored the statutes of the entire English-speaking world and that they are dished up to us, with new sauces, in every political campaign.

And so it is with playwrights. Ibsen is far less popular than Clyde Fitch, but Ibsen's ideas are fast becoming universal. Persons who would, under no consideration, pay $2 a seat to see "Ghosts," pay that sum willingly when "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" or "The Climbers" is the bill. From these plays, unknowingly, they absorb Ibsenism in a palatable and diluted form, like children who take castor oil in taffy. That either is a conscious imitation of any Ibsen drama I do not intend to affirm. What I mean is that the Norwegian is that model of practically every contemporary play-

maker worth considering, just as plainly as Molière was the model of Congreve, Wycherley, and Sheridan. A commanding personality, in literature as well as in statecraft, creates an atmosphere, and lesser men, breathing it, take on its creator's characteristics.

Shaw himself, a follower of Ibsen, has shown variations sufficiently marked to bring him followers of his own. In all the history of the English stage, no man has exceeded him in technical resources nor in nimbleness of wit. Some of his scenes are fairly irresistible, and throughout his plays his avoidance of the old-fashioned machinery of the drama gives even his wildest extravagances an air of reality. So far but two men have exhibited skill in this regard at all measurable with his. They are Israel Zangwill and James M. Barrie. Perhaps neither of them consciously admires Shaw: but the fact is of small importance. The essential thing is that "The Admirable Crichton" is of Shaw, Shavian, and that "Agnes-Sit-By-The Fire," in conception, development and treatment, might be one of the "Plays Pleasant."

And now let us proceed to a consideration of the Shaw plays.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW: HIS PLAYS

"MRS. WARREN'S PROFESSION."

MRS. "KITTY" WARREN, the central character of Shaw's most remarkable play (and it is one of the most remarkable plays, in many ways, of the time) is a successful practitioner of what Kipling calls the oldest profession in the world. She is no betrayed milkmaid or cajoled governess, this past mistress of the seventh unpardonable sin, but a wide-awake and deliberate sinner, who has studied the problem thoroughly and come to the conclusion, like Huckleberry Finn, that it is better, by far, to sin and be damned than to remain virtuous and suffer. The conflict in the play is between Mrs. Warren and her daughter, and in developing it, Shaw exhibits his insight into the undercurrents of human nature to a superlative degree. Mrs. Warren, though she is a convention smasher, does not stand for heterodoxy. In truth despite all her elaborate defense of herself and her bitter arraignment of the social conditions that have made her what she is, she is a worshiper of respectability and the only true

believer, save one, in the play. It is Vivie, her daughter, a virgin, who holds the brief against orthodoxy.

"If I had been you, mother," says Vivie, in the last scene, when the two part forever, "I might have done as you did; but I should not have lived one life and believed another. You are a conventional woman at heart. That is why I am leaving you now."

This complexity of character has puzzled a good many readers of the play, but though there is a complexity, there is no real confusion. Mrs. Warren, despite her ingenious reasoning, is a vulgar, ignorant woman, little capable of analyzing her own motives. Vivie, on the other hand, is a girl of quick intelligence and extraordinary education—a Cambridge scholar, a mathematician and a student of the philosophies. As the play opens Mrs. Warren seems to have all the best of it. She is the rebel and Vivie is the slave. But in the course of the strangely searching action, there is a readjustment. Convention overcomes the mother and crushes her; her daughter, on the other hand, strikes off her shackles and is free.

At the beginning Vivie is home from Cambridge, where she has tied with the third wrangler—for and in consideration of a purse of $250 offered by Mrs. Warren. For years she has seen very little of her mother, and now, on the eve of a reunion, she is curious and inquisitive. They set up housekeeping in a small cottage in the country, near the parsonage of the Rev. Samuel

Gardner, " a pretentious, booming, noisy person," and the friend of Mrs. Warren. There come, too, Sir George Crofts, " a gentlemanly combination of the most brutal types of city man, sporting man and man-about-town," and one Praed, a sort of Greek chorus to the drama. The Rev. Mr. Gardner's son, Frank, " an entirely good-for-nothing young fellow," is attracted to Vivie, and so when Crofts casts his eye upon her, there begins the action of a drama.

Vivie, beginning by wondering at her mother's long absence from home, ends by harboring a sickening sense of suspicion. The elder woman's unconscious vulgarities, her bizarre view-point, her championing of Crofts —all add fuel to the flame of doubt. At first Mrs. Warren tries browbeating, after the orthodox custom of parents, but to her horror she finds that Vivie will not submit to such an exercise of authority. And soon they are face to face in a mighty struggle and there is no quarter on either side.

Finally Vivie demands to know the name of her father. Mrs. Warren blusters, threatens, begs, evades, lies—and ends by breaking down and telling the truth. Vivie is disgusted, horrified, appalled; Mrs. Warren, at first in tears, returns to her browbeating.

" What right have you to set yourself above me like this? " she demands. " You boast of what you are to me—to me who gave you the chance of being what you are . . ."

"You attack me with the conventional authority of a mother," replies Vivie calmly. "I defend myself with the conventional superiority of a respectable woman . . ."

But for the present, it is Mrs. Warren who triumphs. She has reasons, arguments, causes, theories: Vivie's shields are merely custom, authority, the law. Mrs. Warren sees her advantage and hastens to seize it. She tells Vivie all—of the squalor that she knew, of her temptation, of the lure of comfort—"a lovely house, plenty of servants and the choicest of eating and drinking"—and finally, of her strong and resolute determination to yield and of the fruits of her yielding.

"Do you think," she says, "that I was such a fool as to let other people trade in my good looks by employing me as a shopgirl, a barmaid or a waitress, when I could trade in them myself and get all the profits, instead of starvation wages . . . ?"

Vivie is visibly impressed, and herein Shaw shows his skill in laying open the human animal. His iconoclasts sometimes go to mass and his saints sometimes sin, exactly as saint and sinner sin and pray in real life. Vivie, we learn in the end, is the real sham-smasher of the two, but in this scene she seems to change places with her mother. Mrs. Warren, alert to the slightest advantage, drives home her logic. It is a scene that exhibits the play of mind upon mind as no other scene in a contemporary play exhibits it, saving only that marvellous one between Marikka and George in "John-

nisfeuer." Mrs. Warren's picture of the forces that overcame her, her sturdy defense of her philosophy of life; her contempt for those who fear to risk their all —it would take a girl more than human to resist these things.

But the season of sentiment and pathos is destined to be brief. Crofts, who is Mrs. Warren's partner in her chain of brothels, resumes his siege of Vivie. Even Mrs. Warren grows nauseated and Vivie's own disgust is undisguised. Then, for a moment, Crofts becomes the conventional villain and hurls the sins of the mother into the daughter's teeth. It is all melodrama here— Crofts grows " black with rage," and Frank, bobbing up, rifle in hand, proposes to shoot him. And then comes the climax.

" Allow me, Mister Frank," says Crofts, " to introduce you to your half-sister, the eldest daughter of the Reverend Samuel Gardner. Miss Vivie: your half-brother. Good morning."

As he turns on his heel, Frank raises the rifle and takes aim at his back.

" You'll testify before the coroner that it's an accident?" he says to Vivie.

She " seizes the muzzle and pulls it round against her breast."

" Fire now," she says. " You may."

After that the play goes downhill to its inevitable conclusion. Vivie, admitting her mother's justification,

revolts against her effort to distort it into a grotesque sort of respectability. So there is a parting and the daughter goes off to London, to begin life anew as a public accountant and conveyancer. Mrs. Warren, now sunk to the wailing, snivelling stage, follows her. The final scene between mother and daughter is strangely impressive. Mrs. Warren pleads and begs and screams. At the end of her rope she turns, and like an animal at bay shows her teeth.

"From this time forth," she shrieks, with the air of a tragedy queen, "I'll do wrong, and nothing but wrong! And I'll prosper on it!"

"Yes," said Vivie philosophically, "it's better to choose your line and go through with it. If I had been you, mother, I might have done as you did; but I should not have lived one life and believed another. . . . That is why I am bidding you good-bye now. . . ."

And so ends the play of "Mrs. Warren's Profession." Posing as a smasher of shams, Mrs. Warren is the most abject devotee in the whole synagogue. Fenced within her virtue, Vivie is a true iconoclast—with seasons of backsliding, it is true (for she is supremely human), but with no permanent slacking of her unfaith.

William Archer, the translator of Ibsen, says that the play is "intellectually and dramatically, one of the most remarkable of the age," and Cunninghame Graham calls it "the best that has been written in English in our generation." And yet James Huneker finds Mrs. War-

ren "a bore" and Vivie "a chilly, waspish pig," and Max Beerhohm, confused by the fact that Vivie runs the whole gamut of passions, up and down again, in the four acts, complains that the play exhibits no change in the characters and that Vivie ends as she begins—"determined to go out into the world to work." Certainly it seems wellnigh incredible that a man of Mr. Beerbohm's discernment should be blind to the vast battles that rage in the girl's soul—her horror at the beginning, her yielding to sentimentality and her declaration for sincerity and truth at the close. Were the play ended with the extraordinary second act, his objections would probably seem fatuous even to himself.

"Mrs. Warren's Profession," as a bit of theatrical mechanics, is unsurpassed. Its events proceed with the inevitable air that marks the work of a thoroughly capable journeyman: not a scene is out of place; not a line is without its meaning and purpose. The characters are sketched in rapidly and vividly and before the first act is half over we have each of them clearly in our eye—Mrs. Warren and her ancient profession, her vulgarities and her string of "private hotels" from Brussels to Buda Pesth; the Rev. Samuel Gardner and his shallow, commonplace hypocrisy; Frank Gardner and his utter worthlessness and blasphemy; Crofts and his mellow lewdness; Vivie and her progress from undergraduate cynicism and spectacular cigar-smoking to

real individualism; and Praed and his soft chanting in the background.

Taken as a play, the drama is wellnigh faultless. It might well serve, indeed, as a model to all who aspire to place upon the stage plausible records of human transactions.

"ARMS AND THE MAN"

"Arms and the man I sing."
—*The Aeneid.*

"ARMS and the Man," on its face, is a military satire, not unrelated to "A Milk White Flag," and Shaw himself hints that he tried to keep it within the sphere of popular comprehension, but under the burlesque and surface wit there lies an idea that the author later elaborated in "Man and Superman." This idea concerns the relationship of the sexes and particularly the matter of mating. Ninety-nine men in every hundred, when they go a-courting, fancy that they are the aggressors in the ancient game and rather pride themselves upon their enterprise and their daring. Hence we find Don Juan a popular hero. As a matter of fact, says Shaw, it is the woman that ordinarily makes the first advances and the woman that lures, forces, or drags the man on to the climax of marriage. You will find this theory set forth in detail in the preface of "Man and Superman" and elaborated in the play itself. In "Arms and the Man" it is overshadowed by the satire, but even a casual study of the drama will reveal its outlines.

The scene of "Arms and the Man" is a small town

in Bulgaria and the time is the winter of the Balkan War, 1885-6. Captain Bluntschli, the hero, is a Swiss soldier of fortune, who takes service with the Servians because war is his trade and Servia happens to be nearer his home than Bulgaria. A machine gun detachment under his command is overwhelmed by a sudden and unscientific charge of blundering Bulgarian horsemen, and he swiftly takes to the woods, being little desirous of shedding his blood unnecessarily. He and his comrades are pursued by Bulgarians bent upon finishing them, and, passing through a small town at night at a gallop, he shins up a rainspout and takes refuge in the bed-chamber of a young woman, Raina Petkoff, the daughter of a Bulgarian officer.

The ensuing scene between the two is a masterpiece of comedy and Richard Mansfield's performances of the play have made it familiar to most American theater-goers. Bluntschli, as Shaw depicts him, is a soldier entirely devoid of the heroics associated in the popular imagination with men of war. He has no yearning to die for his country or any other country, and, after bullying his unwilling hostess with an unloaded revolver, he frankly confesses that he is hungry and sleepy, and that, as a general proposition, he prefers a good dinner to a forlorn hope. She is a young woman suffering from much romanticism and undigested French fiction, and very naturally she is tremendously astonished. Her heavy-eyed intruder, as a matter of fact, fairly appals

her. His common-sense seems idiocy and his callous realism sacrilege.

But, nevertheless, the theatricality of his appearance makes an overwhelming appeal to her and she shelters him and conceals him from his enemies—her countrymen—and when he goes away, she sends after him a portrait of herself, just as any other romantic young woman might do. To her the incident is epochal, but Bluntschli himself gives little thought to it. As he says afterwards, a soldier soon forgets such things: "He is always getting his life saved in all sorts of ways by all sorts of people." So he fights a bit, forages a bit, perspires a bit, draws his pay, eats his meals, and waits, in patience, for the war to end.

But Raina does not forget. Even when peace comes at last and her betrothed, Major Sergius Saranoff, comes home, she still remembers her "chocolate-cream soldier." Sergius was the blundering ass whose reckless charge sent Bluntschli flying through the night into Raina's chamber. He is a queer mixture of romanticist and realist, of aristocrat and blackguard, with the ideals alternately of a Cæsar and a potman. One moment he revels in a Byronic ecstacy with Raina, the next moment he is making Mulvaney-like advances to Louka, her maid.

This Louka is one of Shaw's peculiarly human characters—a sort of refined and developed Regina, taken from "Ghosts" and given an essentially Shavian cast.

She has a soul above servility, though she answers Raina's bell, and when Saranoff, awakening to his own grotesque hypocrisy, revolts against Raina's idealization of his very tawdry heroics, Louka is ready to enmesh him in her net. She will be a fine lady, this superwoman in a maid's cap, and like Raina she will go to Belgrade for the opera and to Vienna for frocks and frills.

Bluntschli, returning, helps to set the stage for her. Raina's father and Sergius, her betrothed, have met the Swiss and invited him to the Petkoff home, not connecting him with the intruder who invaded Raina's bedchamber. They want him to give them aid in the prosaic business of putting up the shutters of war—to show them how to get their men home and feed them on the way. This is his true forte and he comes to the domicile of the Petkoffs—and again meets Raina. She is now twenty-three, and the usual physiological revulsion against Byronic sentiment is beginning to stir her. She sees that Sergius, with all his gallant cavalry charges and play-acting, is rather a cheap sort after all, and in the same light she sees that Bluntschli, despite his frank running away and his fondness for chocolate-creams, is the more honest of the two. The Swiss himself still gives little thought to her. His business is to show old Petkoff how to bring his regiments home, and after that, to return to Switzerland and take over the management of his deceased father's chain of Alpine hotels.

But, as Shaw hints, the man in the case has little to do with the ordering of such dramas. Raina and Louka, each with her prey in sight, fall to the chase. Sergius wavers, holds himself together, essays a flight, is dragged back, and capitulates. As Louka carries him into camp, the innocent and romantic little Raina is left free to bag Bluntschli. He walks into the net with eyes wide open and, as it were, sword in hand. When he finds himself enmeshed he is surprised beyond measure, but he is a good soldier, is Bluntschli, and this time it is too late to run away.

" Major Petkoff," he says to the old man, " I beg to propose formally to become a suitor for your daughter's hand."

And that is the end of the drama.

A detailed description would spoil the charm of the play's exuberant and boundless humor. As a comedy it is capital, from the scene of Bluntschli's entrance into Raina's chamber to the last scene of all, wherein the Petkoffs cross-examine him as to his finances. Bluntschli is no mere burlesque. In him Shaw has tried to depict a real soldier as opposed to a soldier of the grand opera or Ivanhoe type. He has succeeded, in his way, as admirably as Cervantes, albeit a great many persons —like Raina herself—whose idea of soldierly bearing is expressed in St. Louis and of heroism in the charge of the Light Brigade, have been vastly puzzled by Bluntschli.

Raina is drawn boldly and with what artists call an open line, and her revolt against romantic tomfoolery and humbug is shown with excellent art. Sergius, with his surface civilization and complex personality—" the half dozen Sergiuses who keep popping in and out of this handsome figure of mine"—and his keen self-analysis, is naturally a less obvious type, but even he is perfectly consistent in his inconsistency. Louka is the female Don Juan—the Donna Anna of " Man and Superman," —to the life. Her deliberate ensnarement of Sergius, in itself would make a drama well worth the writing. The Petkoffs, Raina's parents, are simple-minded barbarians, and Nicola, their man-servant, who willingly resigns Louka to Sergius, is of a breed not peculiar to Bulgaria.

The play, despite its abounding humor and excellent characterizations, is not to be numbered among Shaw's best. The second act, which should be the strongest, is the weakest, and the remarkable originality and humor of the first scene rather detract from those that follow. Shaw describes the play as his first attempt at writing a drama comprehensible to the general public. With this object in view, he lavished upon it a wealth of wit, but it is to be doubted if the real, inner humor of the action has ever gone home. Mansfield still has it in his repertory, but he seldom presents it. Persons who admire " Beaucaire " and " Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde " are not apt to demand it.

"THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLE"

IN "Mrs. Warren's Profession" we saw individuals battling against the law and in "Arms and the Man" we observed romanticism in an *opera-bouffe* catch-as-catch-can struggle with realism. In "The Devil's Disciple" we have revealed religion bruising its fists upon the hard head of impious doubt. Dick Dudgeon, the hero (and he is a hero of the good old white-shirted, bare-necked, melodramatic sort) laughs at the commandments and the beatitudes—and then puts the virtuous to rout by an act of supreme nobility that few of them, with all their faith in post-mortem reward, would dare to venture.

It is a problem in human motives that looks formidable. Why does Dick, the excommunicated, brave Hell to save another? Why does he face death, dishonor, shame and damnation, with no hope of earthly recompense and less of glory in the beyond? For the same reason, in truth, that moved Huckleberry Finn to save the nigger Jim at the cost of his immortal soul. "I had no motive," says Dick, in an attempt at self-analysis, "and no interest. All I can tell you is that when it came to the point whether I would take my neck out of the noose and put another man's into it, I couldn't do

it." You will find the psychology of this worked out in the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, the mad German. If you think well of your belief in the good and the beautiful, don't read them.

The scene of "The Devil's Disciple" is a small town in New England and the time is the first year of the Revolutionary War. Shaw set the action back this far because he wanted to display Dick against a background of peculiarly steadfast and rock-ribbed faith, and the present, alackaday! has little of it that isn't wobbly. Dick's mother is a Puritan of the Puritans—a fetich worshiper whose fetich is the mortification of the flesh. She flays her body, her mind and her soul and in the end essays to flay the souls of those about her. Against all of this Dick revolts. He doesn't know exactly why, for Darwin is unborn and doubt is still indecent, but he revolts, nevertheless. And so he becomes a disciple of the devil.

King George's red-coats are abroad in the land, on the hunt for rebels, and Dick's uncle, a blasphemer and sinner like himself, is nabbed by them and hanged for treason. Dick sees the hanging and enjoys it as a spectacle, but it fails to make him a tory, and he comes home as much an enemy of church and king as ever. Then the soldiers come nearer and the rumor spreads that they propose to hang Dick as horrible example the second. Anthony Anderson, the village pastor, undertakes to warn him, and incidentally to counsel him

against his sacrilege and his sins. Dick, in turn, warns Anderson. King George's men, he says, will not choose the village heretic the next time. The uselessness of such a course has been shown in the case of his late and unlamented uncle. When they come to hang again, he points out, they will select a patriot whose taking off will leave a profound impression and something approaching regret—to wit, Anderson himself. The pastor laughs at this. He is a holy man and a truly good one. He fears no military but the hosts of darkness.

But Dick is right after all. One morning he goes to the Anderson home and while he is there the pastor is called away to the bedside of his (Dick's) mother. Dick does not think it is worth while to go himself. His mother has tortured and preached at him from birth and he frankly hates her. During the pastor's absence soldiers come to the door. They have a warrant for the good dominie, charging him with treason. The sergeant sees Dick, and—

"Anthony Anderson," he says, "I arrest you in King George's name as a rebel. . . . Put on your coat and come along. . . ."

And so Dick faces his Calvary, with no faith to lead him on. By all the books he should seek shelter behind the truth and leave self-sacrifice to the godly. But he is a man, this devil's disciple, and he doesn't.

"Yes," he says, "I'll come."

The whole drama is played in this first act of the play

and the rest of it is chiefly rather commonplace melodrama. Judith, the pastor's wife, finds her anchors of faith and virtue swept away by Dick's stupendous sacrifice. At the beginning it seems her duty to hate him. She ends by loving him. But Shaw complains pathetically of the stupidity which made an actor account for Dick's heroism by exhibiting him as in love with her in turn. "From the moment that this fatally plausible explanation was launched," he says, "my play . . . was not mine . . . But, then, where is the motive? On the stage, it appears, people do things for reasons. Off the stage they don't." . . . Herein the dramatist reads his orders aright. It is his business to set the stage and give the show. The solution of its problems and the pointing of its morals—these things are the business of those who pay to see it. Let each work it out for himself—with such incidental help as he may obtain from the aforesaid Friedrich Nietzsche.

Dick is by no means the only full-length figure in the drama. Anderson, the parson, is, in many ways, a creation of equal subtlety and interest. He is a true believer to the outward eye, and he plays his part honestly and conscientiously, but when the supreme moment comes, the man springs out from the cleric's black coat and we have Captain Anthony Anderson, of the Springtown Militia. The colonists, so far, have fought the king's red-coats with threats and curses. When Dick's sacrifice spurs him to hot endeavor, Anderson is found to be

the leader foreordained. Off come his sable trappings and out come his pistols—and he leads his embattled farmers to Dick's rescue and to the war for freedom. It is a transformation supremely human, and in addition, vociferously dramatic. A wary builder of scenes is this man Shaw! A Sardou peeping from behind Ibsen's whiskers!

One of the minor characters is General Burgoyne, that strange mixture of medieval romance and modern common-sense who met his doom at the hands of the Yankee farm-hands at Saratoga. Shaw pictures him as a sort of aristocratic and foppish Captain Bluntschli and devotes seven pages of a remarkably interesting appendix to defending the consequent battering of tradition. "He is not a conventional stage soldier," says Shaw, "but as faithful a portrait as it is in the nature of stage portraits to be."

The same may be said of most of Shaw's characters. Dick Dudgeon is certainly not a conventional stage hero, despite his self-sacrifice, his white shirt, his bare neck, and his melodramatic rescue in the nick of time. But he is a living figure, for all that, because his humanity is fundamental. As Shaw himself says, some enemy of the gods has always been a popular hero, from the days of Prometheus. That such an enemy may be truly heroic, and even godlike, is evident, but evident facts are not always obvious ones, and it requires plays like "The Devil's Disciple" to remind us of them.

"Dick Dudgeon," says Shaw in his preface, "is a Puritan of the Puritans. He is brought up in a household where the Puritan religion has died and become, in its corruption, an excuse for his mother's master-passion of hatred in all its phases of cruelty and envy. In such a home he finds himself starved of religion, which is the most clamorous need of his nature. With all his mother's indomitable selfishness, but with pity instead of hatred as his master-passion, he pities the devil, takes his side, and champions him, like a true Covenanter, against the world. He thus becomes, like all genuinely religious men, a reprobate and an outcast. Once this is understood, the play becomes straightforwardly simple."

"WIDOWERS' HOUSES"

JUST as Ibsen, when he set up shop as a dramatist, began by imitating the great men of his time, so Shaw, when he abandoned novel-writing for play-making, modeled his *opus* upon the dramas then in fashion. Ibsen's first play was a one-act melodrama of the old school called "Kiaempehöien" and it has been forgotten, happily, these fifty years. Shaw's bow was made in "Widowers' Houses," a three-act comedy. Begun in 1885, in collaboration with William Archer, the incompleted manuscript was dusted, revamped and pushed to "finis" in 1892. It is not a masterpiece, but its production by the Independent Theater Company of London, served to introduce Shaw to the public, and thus it had a respectable purpose. Admittedly modeled upon the early comedies of Pinero and Jones, it shows plain evidences that it was produced during the imitative stage of the author's growth. It has scenes of orthodox build, it has an "emotional" climax at the end and there are even soliloquys—but the mark of Shaw is plainly upon every line of it. The "grand" scene between the hero and the heroine might be from "Man and Superman." There is imitation in it, as there is in the earlier

works of most men of creative genius, but there is also a vast deal of originality.

At the time the play was begun Shaw was engrossed in the propaganda of the Fabian Society and so it was not unnatural that, when he set out to write a play he made a social problem the foundation stone of it. Harry Trench, a young Englishman but twice removed from the lesser aristocracy and with the traditional ideals and ideas of his caste, is the tortured Prince of this little "Hamlet." Happening in his travels upon two fellow Britishers—father and daughter—he falls in love with the latter and in due course makes his honorable proposals. The father, scenting the excellent joys of familiar association with Harry's titled relatives, gives his paternal blessing, and the affair bobs along in a manner eminently commonplace and refined. The clan Sartorius has money; the clan Trench has blood. An alliance between Harry and the fair Miss Sartorius is one obviously desirable.

But before the wedding day is set, there comes trouble aplenty. By accident Harry is led into an investigation of the manner in which the Sartorius pounds, shillings and pence reach the wide pockets of his *fiancée's* father. What he discovers fairly horrifies him. Papa Sartorius wrings his thousands from the people of the gutter. Down in the slums of St. Giles, of Marylebone and of Bethnal Green lie his estates—rows upon rows of filthy, tumble-down tenements. The pound saved on repairs kills a slum baby—and buys Blanche Sartorius a new

pair of gloves. The shillings dragged from reluctant costermongers and washerwomen give Sartorius his excellent cigars. He is the worst slum landlord in London—the most heartless, the most grasping, the most murderous and the most prosperous. His millions pile up as his tenants shuffle off to the potter's field.

Harry's disgust is unspeakable. He will have nothing of the Sartorius hoard. Rather starve upon his miserable $3500 a year! He will work—he has a license to practise upon his fellow-men as physician and surgeon—and he and Blanche will face the world bravely. But Blanche, unfortunately, does not see it in that light. Harry's income is regular and safe, but seven hundred pounds is no revenue for the daughter and son-in-law of a millionaire. And when she discovers the reason for Harry's singular self-sacrifice and modesty, her pride rages high. After all, Sartorius is her father. He may squeeze his tenants for the last farthing, but he has been good to her. His money has been hers, and even when she fathoms the depths of his heartlessness, her shame does not break her loyalty. So she sends Harry about his business and seeks consolation in maidenly tears. Thus they remain for a space—he sacrificing his love to his ideals of honesty and honor, and she offering her virtuous affection upon the altar of filial allegiance and pride.

It is Sartorius who solves the problem. He is not shocked by Harry's revolt, by any means. The world, as he knows, is full of such silly scruples and senseless

ideas of altruism. And, at any rate, he is willing to give his tenants as much as he can afford. He explains it all to Blanche.

" I have made up my mind," he says, " to improve the property and get in a new class of tenants. . . . I am only waiting for the consent of the ground landlord, Lady Roxdale."

Lady Roxdale is Harry's aristocratic aunt and Blanche's face shows her surprise.

" Lady Roxdale ! " she exclaims.

" Yes," replies her fond papa. " But I shall expect the mortgagee to take his share of the risk."

" The mortgagee ! " says Blanche. " Do you mean——"

" Harry Trench," says Sartorius blandly, finishing the sentence for her.

And so the melancholy fact is laid bare that Harry's safe and honorable $3500 a year, upon which he proposed to Blanche that they board and lodge in lieu of her father's tainted thousands, is just as dirty, penny for penny, as the latter. Sartorius puts it before Harry, too, and very plainly.

" When I," he says, " to use your own words, screw and bully and drive those people to pay what they have freely undertaken to pay me, I cannot touch one penny of the money they give me until I have first paid you your seven hundred pounds out of it . . ."

Of course, that puts a new face upon the situation.

Thinking over it calmly, Harry comes to the conclusion that the oppression of slum dwellers is a thing regrettable and deplorable, but, on the whole, inevitable and necessary. As Sartorius shows him, they would not appreciate generosity if it were accorded them. Ethically, they are to be pitied; practically, pity would do them no good. In matters of money a man must make some sacrifice of his ideals and look out for himself. And so Harry and Blanche are united with benefit of clergy and the Sartorius money and the Trench blood enters upon an honorable and—let us hope—happy and permanent alliance.

In incident and character-drawing the play is rather elemental. Sartorius is the stock capitalist of drama—a figure as invariable as the types in Jerome K. Jerome's "Stageland." And the other persons of the play—Harry Trench, the altruist with reservations; William de Burgh Cokane, his mentor in orthodox hypocrisy; Lickcheese, Sartorius' rent-collector and rival, and Blanche herself—all rather impress us as beings we have met before. Nevertheless, an occasional flash reveals the fine Italian hand of Shaw—a hand albeit, but yet half trained. That Blanche is a true daughter to Sartorius, psychologically as well as physically, is shown in a brief scene wherein she and a serving maid are the only players. And the "grand" scene at the close of the play, between Blanche and Harry, smells of the latter-day Shaw to high heaven. Harry has come to her father's

house to discuss their joint affairs and she goes at him savagely:

"Well? So you have come back here. You have had the meanness to come into this house again. (*He blushes and retreats a step.*) What a poor-spirited creature you must be! Why don't you go? (*Red and wincing, he starts huffily to get his hat from the table, but when he turns to the door with it she deliberately gets in his way, so that he has to stop.*) *I* don't want you to stay. (*For a moment they stand face to face, quite close to one another, she provocative, taunting, half-defying, half-inviting him to advance, in a flush of undisguised animal excitement. It suddenly flashes upon him that all this ferocity is erotic—that she is making love to him. His eye lights up; a cunning expression comes into the corner of his mouth; with a heavy assumption of indifference he walks straight back to his chair and plants himself in it with his arms folded. She comes down the room after him.*) . . ."

It is too late for poor Harry to beat a retreat. He is lost as hopelessly as John Tanner in "Man and Superman" and in the same way.

The scene savors strongly of Nietzsche, particularly in its frank acceptance of the doctrine that, when all the poets have had their say, plain physical desire is the chief basis of human mating. No doubt Shaw's interest in Marx and Schopenhauer led him to make a pretty thorough acquaintance with all the German metaphysi-

cians of the early eighties. "Widowers' Houses" was begun in 1885, four years before Nietzsche was dragged off to an asylum. In 1892, when the play was completed and the last scene written, the mad German's theories of life were just beginning to gain a firm foothold in England.

"THE PHILANDERER"

SHAW calls "The Philanderer" a topical comedy, which describes it exactly. Written in 1893, at the height of the Ibsen craze, it served a purpose like that of the excellent *revues* which formerly adorned the stage of the New York Casino. Frankly, a burlesque upon fads of the moment, its interest now is chiefly archeological. For these many moons we have ceased to regard Ibsen as a man of subterranean mystery—who has heard any talk of "symbolic" plays for two years?—and have learned to accept his dramas as dramas and his heroines as human beings. Those Ibsenites of '93 who haven't grown civilized and cut their hair are now buzzing about the head of Maeterlinck or D'Annunzio or some other new god. To enjoy "A Doll's House" is no longer a sign of extraordinary intellectual muscularity. The stock companies of Peoria and Oil City now present it as a matter of course, between "The Henrietta" and "Camille."

But when Shaw wrote "The Philanderer" a wave of groping individualism was sweeping over Europe, the United States and other more or less Christian lands. Overeducated young women of the middle class, with

fires of discontent raging within them, descended upon Nora Helmer with a whoop and became fearsome Ibsenites. They formed clubs, they pleaded for freedom, for a wider area of development, for an equal chance; they demanded that the word "obey" be removed from their lines in the marriage comedy; they wrote letters to the newspapers; they patronized solemn pale-green matinées: some of them even smoked cigarettes. Poor old Nietzsche had something to do with this uprising. His ideas regarding the orthodox virtues, mangled in the mills of his disciples, appeared on every hand. Iconoclasts, amateur and professional, grew as common as policemen.

Very naturally, this series of phenomena vastly amused our friend from Ireland. Himself a devoted student of Ibsen's plays and a close friend to William Archer, their translator, he saw the absurdity and pretense in the popular excitement, and so set about making fun of it.

In "The Philanderer" he shows a pack of individualists at war with the godly. Grace Tranfield and Julia Craven, young women of the period, agree that marriage is degrading and enslaving, and so join an Ibsen club, spout stale German paradoxes and prepare to lead the intellectual life. But before long both fall in love, and with the same man, and thereafter, in plain American, there is the devil to pay. Julia tracks the man—his name is Leonard Charteris—to Grace's home and fairly drags him out of her arms, at the same time, yelling,

shouting, weeping, howling and gnashing her teeth. Charteris, barricading himself behind furniture, politely points out the inconsistency of her conduct.

"As a woman of advanced views," he says, "you determined to be free. You regarded marriage as a degrading bargain, by which a woman sold herself to a man for the social status of a wife and the right to be supported and pensioned out of his income in her old age. That's the advanced view—our view . . ."

"I am too miserable to argue—to think," wails Julia. "I only know that I love you. . . ."

And so a fine temple of philosophy, built of cards, comes fluttering down.

As the struggle for Charteris' battle-scarred heart rages, other personages are drawn into the trenches, unwillingly and greatly to their astonishment. Grace's papa, a dramatic critic of the old school, and Julia's fond parent, a retired military man, find themselves members of the Ibsen club and participants in the siege of their daughters' reluctant Romeo. Percy Paramore, a highly respectable physician, also becomes involved in the fray. In the end he serves the useful peace-making purpose delegated to axmen and hangmen in the ancient drama. Charteris, despairing of eluding the erotic Julia shunts her off into Paramore's arms. Then Grace, coming out of her dream, wisely flings him the mitten and the curtain falls.

It is frankly burlesque and in places it is Weberfieldian

in its extravagance. It was not presented in London in 1893 because no actors able to understand it could be found. When it was published it made a great many honest folk marvel that a man who admired Ibsen as warmly as Shaw could write such a lampoon on the Ibsenites. This was the foundation of Shaw's present reputation as a most puzzling manufacturer of paradoxes. The simple fact that the more a man understood and admired Ibsen the more he would laugh at the grotesqueries of the so-called Ibsenites did not occur to the majority, for the reason that an obvious thing of that sort always strikes the majority as unintellectual and childish and, in consequence, unthinkable. So Shaw got fame as a paradoxical sleight-of-hand man, as Ibsen did with "The Wild Duck" in 1884, and it has clung to him ever since. At present every time he rises to utterances a section of the public quite frankly takes it for granted that he means exactly the opposite of what he says.

It is unlikely that "The Philanderer" will ever take the place of "East Lynne" or "Charley's Aunt" in the popular repertoire. In the first place, as has been mentioned, it is archaic and, in the second place, it is not a play at all, but a comic opera libretto in prose, savoring much of "Patience" and "The Princess Ida." In the whole drama there is scarcely a scene even remotely possible.

Every line is vastly amusing,—even including the

sermonizing of which Mr. Huneker complains,—but all remind one of the "I-am-going-away-from-here" colloquy between "Willie" Collier and Miss Louise Allen in a certain memorable entertainment of Messrs. Weber and Fields.

"CAPTAIN BRASSBOUND'S CONVERSION"

CAPTAIN BRASSBOUND'S CONVERSION" is a fantastic comedy, written with no very ponderous ulterior purpose and without the undercurrents that course through some of Shaw's plays, but nevertheless, it is by no means a bit of mere foolery. The play of character upon character is shown with excellent skill, and if the drama has never attracted much attention from aspiring comedians it is because the humor is fine-spun, and not because it is weak.

The scene is the coast of Morocco and the hero, Captain Brassbound, is a sort of refined, latter-day pirate, who has a working arrangement with the wild natives of the interior and prospers in many ventures. To his field of endeavor come two jaded English tourists—Sir Howard Hallam, a judge of the criminal bench, and Lady Cicely Waynflete, his sister-in-law. Lady Cicely is a queer product of her sex's unrest. She has traveled often and afar; she has held converse with cannibal kings; she has crossed Africa alone. Hearing that it is well-nigh suicidal to venture into the Atlas Mountains, which rear their ancient peaks from the eastern skyline, she is seized by a yearning to explore them. Sir

Howard expostulates, pleads, argues, and storms—and in the end consents to go with her.

It is here that Brassbound enters upon the scene—in the capacity of guide and commander of the expedition. He is a strange being, this gentleman pirate, a person of "olive complexion, dark southern eyes . . . grim mouth . . . and face set to one tragic purpose . . ." A man of blood and iron. A hero of scarlet romance, red-handed and in league with the devil.

And so the little caravan starts off—Sir Howard, Lady Cicely, Brassbound and half a dozen of Brassbound's thugs and thieves. They have little adventures and big adventures and finally they reach an ancient Moorish castle in the mountains, heavy with romance and an ideal scene for a tragedy. And here Brassbound reveals his true colors. Pirate no longer, he becomes traitor—and betrays his charges to a wild Moroccan chieftain.

But it is not gold that leads him into this crime, nor anything else so prosaic or unworthy. Revenge is his motive—dark, red-handed revenge of the sort that went out of fashion with shirts of mail. He has been seeking a plan for Sir Howard's destruction for years and years, and now, at last, providence has delivered his enemy into his hands.

To see the why and wherefore of all this, it is necessary to know that Sir Howard, before reaching his present eminence, had a brother who fared upon the sea to

the West Indies and there acquired a sugar estate and a yellow Brazilian wife. When he died the estate was seized by his manager and his widow took to drink. With her little son she proceeded to England, to seek Sir Howard's aid in her fight for justice. Disgusted by her ill-favored person and unladylike habits, he turned her out of doors and she, having no philosophy, straightway drank herself to death. And then, after many years, Sir Howard himself, grown rich and influential, used his riches and his influence to dispossess the aforesaid dishonest manager of his brother's estate. Of the bibulous widow's son he knew nothing, but this son, growing up, remembered. In the play he bobs into view again. He is Captain Brassbound, pirate.

Brassbound has cherished his elaborate scheme of vengeance for so many years that it has become his other self. Awake and sleeping he thinks of little else, and when, at last, the opportunity to execute it arrives, he goes half mad with exultation. That such revenges have come to seem ridiculous to civilized men, he does not know. His life has been cast along barren coasts and among savages and outcasts, and ethically he is a brother to the crusaders. His creed still puts the strong arm above the law, and here is his chance to make it destroy one of the law's most eminent ornaments. Viewed from his standpoint the stage is set for a stupendous and overpowering drama.

But the saturnine captain reckons without the fair Lady

Cicely. In all his essentials, he is a half-savage hairy-armed knight of the early thirteenth century. Lady Cicely, calm, determined and cool, is of the late nineteenth. The conflict begins furiously and rages furiously to the climax. When the end comes Brassbound feels his heroics grow wabbly and pitiful; he sees himself mean and ridiculous.

"Damn you!" he cries in a final burst of rage. "You have belittled my whole life to me!"

There is something pathetic in the figure of the pirate as his ideals come crashing down about his head and he blindly gropes in the dark.

"It was vulgar—vulgar," he says. "I see that now; for you have opened my eyes to the past; but what good is that for the future? What am I to do? Where am I to go?"

It is not enough that he undoes his treason and helps to save Sir Howard. What he wants is some rule of life to take the place of the smashed ideals of his wasted years. He gropes in vain and ends, like many another man, by idealizing a woman.

"You seem to be able to make me do pretty well what you like," he says to Lady Cicely, "but you cannot make me marry anybody but yourself."

"Do you really want a wife?" asks Cicely archly.

"I want a commander," replies the reformed Brassbound. "I am a good man when I have a good leader."

He is not the first man that has fallen beneath the

spell of her dominating and masterful ego, to mistake his obedience for love, and she bluntly tells him so. And thus they part—Brassbound to return to his ship and his smuggling, and Cicely to go home to England.

As will be observed, this is no ordinary farce, but a play of considerable depth and beam. Shaw is a master of the art of depicting such conflicts as that here outlined, and Brassbound and Cicely are by no means the least of his creations. With all the extravagance of the play, there is something real and human about each, and the same may be said of the lesser characters—Sir Howard; the Rev. Leslie Rankin, missionary and philosopher; Drinkwater, Brassbound's recruit from the slums of London; the Moorish chiefs; Captain Hamlin Kearney of the U. S. S. *Santiago,* who comes to Sir Howard's rescue, and the others.

The chief fault of the play is the fact that the exposition, in the first act, requires an immense amount of talk without action. The whole act, in truth, might be played with all of the characters standing still. Later on, there is plenty of movement, but the play as a whole is decidedly inferior to the majority of the Shaw dramas. The dialogue lacks the surface brilliancy of "You Never Can Tell" and "Candida" and the humor, in places, is too delicate, almost, for the theme. The piece, in fact, is a satirical melodrama disguised as a farce—a melodrama of the true Shaw brand, in which the play of mind upon mind overshadows the play of club upon skull.

"CÆSAR AND CLEOPATRA"

BECAUSE he put it forth as a rival to "Julius Cæsar" and "Anthony and Cleopatra," Shaw's "Cæsar and Cleopatra" has been the football in an immense number of sanguinary critical rushes. His preface to it is headed "Better than Shakespeare?" and he frankly says that he thinks it *is* better. But that he means thereby to elbow himself into the exalted position occupied by William of Avon for 300 years does not follow. "In manner and art," he said, in a recent letter to the London *Daily News*, "nobody can write better than Shakespeare, because, carelessness apart, he did the thing as well as it can be done within the limits of human faculty." Shaw, in other words, by no means lacks a true appreciation of Shakespeare's genius. What he endeavors to maintain is simply the claim that, to modern audiences, *his* Cæsar and *his* Cleopatra should seem more human and more logical than Shakespeare's. That this is a thesis susceptible of argument no one who has read "Cæsar and Cleopatra" will deny.

"The sun do move," said the Rev. Mr. Jasper. Shaw says the same thing of the world. In Shakespeare's day knighthood was still in flower and the popular ideals of

military perfection were medieval. A hero was esteemed in proportion as he approached Richard Cœur de Lion. Chivalry was yet a very real thing and the masses of the people were still influenced by the transcendentalism of the Crusades. And so, when Shakespeare set out to draw a conqueror and hero of the first rank, he evolved an incarnation of these far-fetched and rather grotesque ideals and called it Julius Cæsar.

To-day men have very different notions. In these piping times of common-sense, were a Joan of Arc to arise, she would be packed off to a home for feeble-minded children. People admire, not Chevalier Bayard, but Lord Kitchener and U. S. Grant; not so much lofty purposes as tangible achievements; not so much rhetoric as accomplishment. For a man to occupy to-day the position held by Cæsar at the beginning of the year 44 B.C. he would have to possess traits far different from those Shakespeare gave his hero. Shaw endeavors to draw a Cæsar with just such modern marks of heroism —to create a Roman with the attributes that might exalt a man, in this prosaic twentieth century, to the eminence attained by the immortal Julius 1900 years ago. In other words, Shaw tries to reconstruct Shakespeare's Cæsar (and incidentally, of course, his Cleopatra) just as a latter-day stage manager must reconstruct the scenes and language of Shakespeare to make them understandable to-day. That his own Cæsar, in consequence, is a more comprehensible, a more human and, on the whole, a more

possible hero than Shakespeare's is the substance of his argument.

The period of the play is the year 48 B.C., when Cleopatra was a girl of sixteen and Cæsar an oldster of fifty-two, with a widening bald spot beneath his laurel and a gradually lessening interest in the romantic side of life. Shaw depicts the young queen as an adolescent savage: ignorant, cruel, passionate, animal, impulsive, selfish and blood-thirsty. She is monarch in name only and spends her time as any child might. Egypt is torn by the feud that finally leads to the Alexandrine war, and, Cleopatra, perforce, is the nominal head of one of the two parties. But she knows little of the wire-pulling and intriguing, and the death of her brother and rival, Ptolemy Dionysius, interests her merely as an artistic example of murder. The health of a sacred cat seems of far more consequence to her than the welfare of Asia Minor.

Cæsar comes to Alexandria to take a hand in the affairs of Egypt and, incidentally, to collect certain moneys due him for past services as a professional conqueror. Cleopatra fears him at first, as a most potent and evil bogey-man, and is so vastly surprised when she finds him quite human, and even commonplace, that she straightway falls in love with him. Cæsar, in return, regards her with a mild and cynical interest. "He is an important public man," says Max Beerbohm, "who knows that a little chit of a girl-queen has taken a fancy to him and is tickled by the knowledge, and behaves very kindly to

her and rather wishes he were young enough to love her." He needs 1600 talents in cash and tries to collect the money. In truth, he has little time to waste in listening to her sighs. Pothinus, of the palace—an early Roman Polonius—is appalled.

"Is it possible," he gasps, "that Cæsar, the conqueror of the world, has time to occupy himself with such a trifle as our taxes?"

"My friend," replies Cæsar affably, "taxes are the chief business of a conqueror of the world."

And so there comes fighting and the burning of the Alexandrine library and the historic heaving of Cleopatra into the sea and other incidents more or less familiar. Through it all the figure of Cæsar looms calm and unromantic. To him this business of war has become a pretty dull trade: he longs for the time when he may retire and nurse his weary bones. He fishes Cleopatra out of the water—and complains of a touch of rheumatism. He sits down to a gorgeous banquet of peacock's brains and nightingale's tongues—and asks for oysters and barley water. Now and then Cleopatra's blandishments tire him. Again, her frank savagery startles and enrages him. In the end, when his work is done and his fee pocketed, when Cleopatra's throne is safe, with Roman soldiers on guard about it, he goes home.

"I will send you a beautiful present from Rome," he tells the volcanic girl-queen.

She demands to know what Rome can offer Egypt.

"I will send you a man," says Cæsar, "Roman from head to heel and Roman of the noblest; not old and ripe for the knife; not lean in the arms and cold in the heart; not hiding a bald head under his conqueror's laurels; not stooped with the weight of the world on his shoulders; but brisk and fresh, strong and young, hoping in the morning, fighting in the day and revelling in the evening. Will you take such an one in exchange for Cæsar?"

"His name? His name?" breathes the palpitating Cleopatra.

"Shall it be Mark Anthony?" says Cæsar.

And the erotic little Cleopatra, who has a vivid remembrance of Anthony's manly charms, born of a fleeting glimpse of him, falls into her elderly friend's arms, speechless with gratitude.

Unlike most of Shaw's plays, "Cæsar and Cleopatra" is modelled upon sweeping and spectacular lines. In its five acts there are countless scenes that recall Sardou at his most magnificent—scenes that would make "Ben Hur" seem pale and "The Darling of the Gods" a parlor play. And so, too, there is plenty of the more exciting sort of action—stabbings, rows, bugle-calls, shouts and tumults. What opportunity it would give to the riotous, purple fancy of Klaw and Erlanger or the pomp and pageantry of David Belasco!

Shaw makes Cleopatra a much more human character than Cæsar. In the latter there appears rather too much of the icy *sang froid* we have grown accustomed to en-

counter in the heroes of the brigade commanded by "The Prisoner of Zenda." Some of Cæsar's witticisms are just a bit too redolent of the professional epigrammatist. Reading the play we fancy him in choker collar and silk hat, with his feet hoisted upon a club window-sill and an Havana cigar in his mouth,—the cynical man-of-the-world of the women novelists. In other words, Shaw, in attempting to bring the great conqueror down to date, has rather expatriated him. He is scarcely a Roman.

Cleopatra, on the contrary, is admirable. Shaw very frankly makes her an animal and her passion for Cæsar is the backbone of the play. She is fiery, lustful and murderous; a veritable she-devil; and all the while an impressionable, superstitious, shadow-fearing child. In his masterly gallery of women's portraits—Mrs. Warren, Blanche Sartorius, Candida, Ann Whitefield and their company—Cleopatra is by no means the least.

The lesser characters—Brittanus, the primitive Briton (a parody of the latter-day Britisher); Apollodorus, the Sicilian dilletante; Ftatateeta, Cleopatra's menial and mistress; Rufio, the Roman general (a sort of Tiber-bred William Dobbin); and the boy Ptolemy—all remain in the memory as personages clearly and certainly drawn.

In view of the chances that the play affords the player and the stage manager it seems curious that it was so long neglected by the Frohmans of the day. Between Shaw's Cæsar and Shakespeare's Cæsar there is a dif-

ference wide enough to make a choice necessary. That a great many persons, pondering the matter calmly, would cast their ballots for the former is a prophecy not altogether absurd. Just as the world has outgrown, in succession, the fairy tale, the morality play, the story in verse, the epic and the ode, so it has outgrown many ideas and ideals regarding humanity that once appeared as universal truths. Shakespeare, says Shaw, was far ahead of his time. This is shown by his Lear. But the need for earning his living made him write down to its level. As a result those of his characters that best pleased his contemporaries—Cæsar, Rosalind, Brutus, etc.—now seem obviously and somewhat painfully Elizabethan.

"A MAN OF DESTINY"

THAT characteristic tendency to look at the under side of things and to explore the depths beneath the obvious surface markings, which Shaw displays in "Cæsar and Cleopatra," "Arms and the Man" and "The Devil's Disciple," is shown at the full in "The Man of Destiny." The play is in one act and in intent it is a mere bravura piece, written, as the author says, "to display the virtuosity of the two principal performers." But its picture of Napoleon Bonaparte, the principal character, is a startlingly novel one, and the little drama is remarkable alike for its fantastic character drawing, its cameo craftsmanship, its ingenious incident and its fairly dazzling dialogue. There is more of the quality called "brilliancy" in its one scene than in most three-act society comedies of the day. Some of its episodes are positive gems.

The Napoleon of the play is not the emperor of popular legend and Meissonier's painting, but the young general of 1796, but recently come to opportunity and still far from immortality. The scene is the parlor of a little inn on the road from Lodi to Milan and the young gen-

eral—he is but twenty-seven—is waiting impatiently for a packet of despatches. He has defeated the Austrians at Lodi, but they are yet foes to be feared and he is very eager to know whether General Massena will make his next stand at Mantua or at Peschiera. A blundering jackass of a lieutenant, the bearer of the expected despatches, comes staggering in with the information that he has been met on the road and outwitted and robbed of them by a boyish young officer of the enemy's. Napoleon flies into a rage, very naturally, but after all it is an incident of the wars and, the papers being lost, he resigns himself to doing without them.

Almost simultaneously there appears from upstairs a handsome young woman. The lieutenant, seeing her, is instantly struck with her remarkable resemblance to the youthful officer who cajoled and robbed him. Napoleon pricks up his ears and orders the half-witted lieutenant out of the room. And then begins a struggle of wits. The young woman and the young officer are one person. Bonaparte knows it and demands the dispatches. But she is a nimble one, this patriot in skirts, and it seems for a while that he will have to play the dragoon and tear them from her bodice. Even when she yields and he has the papers in his hands, she is the victor. There is one letter that he dare not read. It is a *billet-doux* from a woman to a man who is not her husband and it has been sent from Paris by a well-meaning blunderer that the husband may read it and learn. Josephine is the

woman, the director Barras is the other man—and Napoleon himself is the husband.

Here we have Bonaparte the man, facing a crisis in his affairs more appalling than any he has ever encountered on the field of war. There is no gleam of a crown ahead to cheer him on and no crash of artillery to hearten him. It is a situation far more terrifying than the fight about the bridge at Lodi, but he meets it squarely and resolutely. And in the end he outplays and vanquishes his fair conqueror.

She tells the blundering lieutenant that the officer boy who outwitted him was her brother.

"If I undertake to place him in your hands, a prisoner," she says, "will you promise me on your honor as an officer and a gentleman not to fight with him or treat him unkindly in any way?"

The simple-minded lieutenant promises—and the young woman slips out and once more discards her skirts for the uniform of a young officer. Then she reappears and surrenders.

"Where are the dispatches?" demands Napoleon, with heavy dissembling.

"My sister has bewitched the general," says the protean stranger. "General: open your coat; you will find the dispatches in the breast of it. . . ."

And lo! they are even there—and all agree that as papers bearing the gristly finger-prints of a witch, they must be burnt. Cæsar's wife must be above suspicion.

"I read them the first thing . . ." whispers the witch's alter ego; "So you see I know what's in them; and you don't."

"Excuse me," replies Napoleon blandly. "I read them when I was out there in the vineyard ten minutes ago."

It would be impossible to exaggerate the humor and delicacy of this little play. Napoleon, it must be remembered, is still a youngster, who has scarcely dared to confess to himself the sublime scope of his ambitions. But the man of Austerlitz and St. Helena peeps out, now and then, from the young general's flashing eyes, and the portrait, in every detail, is an admirable one. Like Thackeray, Shaw is fond of considering great men in their ordinary everyday aspects. He knows that Marengo was but a day, and that there were thousands of other days in the Little Corporal's life. It is such week-days of existence that interest him, and in their light he has given us plays that offer amazingly searching studies of Cæsar and of Bonaparte, not to speak of General Sir John Burgoyne.

"THE ADMIRABLE BASHVILLE"

"THE ADMIRABLE BASHVILLE, or Constancy Rewarded," a blank verse farce in two tableaux, is a dramatization by Shaw of certain incidents in his novel, "Cashel Byron's Profession." Cashel Byron, the hero of the novel, is a prize-fighter who wins his way to the hand and heart of Lydia Carew, a young woman of money, education and what Mulvaney calls "theouries." Cashel sees in Lydia a remarkably fine girl; Lydia sees in Cashel an idealist and a philosopher as well as a bruiser. The race of Carew, she decides, needs an infusion of healthy red blood. And so she marries Byron—and they live happily ever after.

Bashville is Lydia's footman and factotum, and he commits the unpardonable solecism of falling in love with her. Very frankly he confesses his passion and resigns his menial portfolio.

"If it is to be my last word," he says, "I'll tell you that the ribbon round your neck is more to me," etc., etc. . . . "I am sorry to inconvenience you by a short notice, but I should take it as a particular favor if I might go this evening."

"You had better," says Lydia, rising quite calmly and

keeping resolutely away from her the strange emotional result of being astonished, outraged and loved at one unlooked-for stroke. " It is not advisable that you should stay after what you have just——"

" I knew that when I said it," interposes Bashville, hastily and doggedly.

" In going away," continues Lydia, " you will be taking precisely the course that would be adopted by any gentleman who had spoken to the same effect. I am not offended by your declaration; I recognize your right to make it. If you need my testimony to further your future arrangements, I shall be happy to say that I believe you to be a man of honor."

An American pugilist-actor, struck by the possibilities of the story, engaged a journeyman playwright to make a play of it, and Shaw, to protect his rights, put together " The Admirable Bashville." The one performance required by the English copyright law was given by the Stage Society at the Imperial Theater, London, in the summer of 1903.

" It was funny," says James Huneker, who witnessed the performance. " It gibed at Shakespeare, at the modern drama, at Parliament, at social snobbery, at Shaw himself, and at almost everything else within reach. The stage setting was a mockery of the Elizabethan stage, with two venerable beef-eaters in Tower costume, who hung up placards bearing the legend, ' A Glade in Wiltstoken Park,' etc. Ben Webster as Cashel Byron and

James Hearn as the Zulu King (whom Cashel entertains by an exhibition of his fistic prowess) carried off the honors. Aubrey Smith, made up as Mr. Shaw in the costume of a policeman with a brogue, caused merriment, especially at the close, when he informed his audience that the author had left the house. And so he had. He was standing at the corner when I accosted him."

Shaw explains that he wrote the extravaganza in blank verse because he had to hurry over it and "hadn't time to write it in the usual prose." To anyone "with the requisite ear and command of words," he says in another place, "blank verse, written under the amazingly loose conditions which Shakespeare claimed, with full liberty to use all sorts of words, colloquial, technical, rhetorical and even obscurely technical, to indulge in the most far-fetched ellipses, and to impress ignorant people with every possible extremity of fantasy and affectation, is the easiest of all known modes of literary expression, and this is why whole oceans of dull bombast and drivel have been emptied on the head of England since Shakespeare's time in this form by people who could not have written 'Box and Cox' to save their lives."

"The Admirable Bashville" may be seen in the United States before long. Not long ago the London *Daily Mail* reported that the eminent comedian and gladiator, Mr. James J. Corbett, was casting eager eyes upon it and that Shaw rather liked the idea of his appearing in it.

"He is a man who has made a success in one profession," the dramatist is reported to have said, "and will therefore understand that there are difficulties to be encountered in making a success in another. Look at the books written to-day, and then consider which you would rather have—a man who can do nothing or a really capable prize-fighter."

All of which you will find, much elaborated, in "Cashel Byron's Profession," which was written in 1882.

"CANDIDA"

"CANDIDA" is a latter-day essay in feminine psychology after the fashion of "A Doll's House," "Monna Vanna" and "Hedda Gabler." Candida Morell, the heroine, is a clergyman's wife, who, lacking an acquaintance with the philosophies and face to face with the problem of earning her daily bread, might have gone the muddy way of Mrs. Warren. As it is, she exercises her fascinations upon a moony poet, arouses him to the mad-dog stage of passion, drives her husband to the verge of suicide—and then, with bland complacency and unanswerable logic, reads both an excellent lecture, turns the poet out of doors, and falls into her husband's arms, still chemically pure. It is an edifying example of the influence of mind over matter.

Arnold Daly's heroic production of the play, at the little Berkeley Lyceum, in New York City, served as the foundation of the present vogue of Shaw in the United States, and in consequence "Candida" has been the theme of many metropolitan and provincial philosophers and critics. At the start the vast majority of them muddled the play hopelessly. Candida, they decided, was a sublime type of the virtuous wife and mother—a good woman whose thoughts were as innocent as her acts. It

remained for Shaw—and he is usually his own best critic—to set them right. Candida, he explained, was a "very immoral female . . . who, without brains and strength of mind . . . would be a wretched slattern or voluptuary." In other words (as he tried to make clear) she remained virtuous, not because there was aught of the vestal or altruist about her, but because she had discovered that it was possible to enjoy all of the ecstatic excitement of a fall from grace, and still, by holding back at the actual brink of the precipice, to retain, in full measure, her reputation as a pattern of fidelity and virtue. She solved the problem of being immoral and respectable at the same time.

The play is well built and thoroughly balanced and mature. Its every scene shows that it is the work of a dramatist whose genius has been mellowed and whose hand has been made sure by experience. The action moves with that certain, natural air peculiar to many of Ibsen's plays. The characters are not sketches, but definitive, finished portraits. They are not obvious types, perhaps, but even the poet, with all his extravagances, is strangely human.

The Rev. James Morell, Candida's husband, is a Christian-socialist of a sort not uncommon on either side of the Atlantic. He has a parish in an unfashionable part of London, and beside the usual futilities of a conscientious clergyman's daily labor, finds time to make frequent addresses to the masses and classes upon the

problems of the hour. In his make-up, there is much of the unconscious make-believe of the actor off the stage, though his own belief in himself is unshaken. Public speaking seems to have this uncanny effect upon many men. Beginning in all sincerity, they gradually lay stress upon the manner of saying a thing at the expense of the matter. Their aim is to make an effect by means of the spoken word and in the end, without realizing it, they become stagey and unnatural. Such a man is Morell. By no means, it will be observed, is he to be mistaken for a hypocrite.

Into his home, by some mad, altruistic impulse, he brings Engene Marchbanks, a moon-struck young man with the romantic ideals and day dreams of a medieval Edgar Allan Poe and the practical common-sense of an infant. Eugene is eighteen. He inhabits a world a mile or so above the pink clouds of the sunset and writes vague, immaterial verses of the sort that all of us invent and some of us set down in pen-and-ink when we are young. At the start, in all probability, Candida regards him as a nuisance. But by the time the play opens she has already lured him on to the rocks. It is pleasant to sit by the fire and listen to his hazy verses. He is a relief from the honest beefiness of Morell. And so Candida has her entertainment and Eugene, poor boy! falls in love with her.

Now, loving another man's wife, since the beginning of written history, has always presupposed or developed

a rather ungenial attitude toward that other man, and Eugene, studying Morell, comes to the conclusion that he is a mere vaporish windbag—a silly bundle of stale platitudes, trite ponderosities and pulpit puerilities. Having the valor of youth, he makes open confession.

"I love your wife," he says to Morell, " . . . a woman with a great soul craving reality, truth, freedom, and being fed on metaphors, sermons, stale perorations, mere rhetoric. Do you think a woman's soul can live on your talent for preaching? . . ."

Morell is staggered, not by Eugene's frank avowal of his love for Candida, but by the other things he has said. What if it is true that she is stifled by the atmosphere of the Morell home? What if it is true that she has tired of being shadow and drudge to an obscure, over-earnest clergyman in a semi-slum and has turned her fancy toward the poet?

"It is easy, terribly easy," he says pathetically, "to break a man's faith in himself. To take advantage of that to break a man's spirit is devil's work. Take care of what you are doing. Take care . . ."

It is a time of torment for the preacher and he sees his house of cards trembling as if for a fall. Eugene, all the while, is defiant and belligerent. He adds the virtue of rescuing Candida to the pleasure of possessing her, and the two together work his swift undoing.

"Send for her!" he roars. "Send for her and let her choose between us!"

Aha, my masters! what a scene is this!—what a scene of mad passion for the gallery to linger over breathlessly, for the orchestra to greet with stares and for the critics to belabor and dissect in the morning!

Candida comes in and the two bid for her heart and helping hand.

"I have nothing to offer you," says Morell, with proud humility, "but my strength for your defense, my honesty of purpose for your surety, my ability and industry for your livelihood, and my authority and position for your dignity. That is all it becomes a man to offer a woman."

"And you, Eugene?" asks Candida quietly. "What do you offer?"

"My weakness!" exclaims the poet passionately. "My desolation! My heart's need!"

"That's a good bid," says Candida judicially. "Now I know how to make my choice."

Then she pauses and looks curiously from one to the other, as if weighing them. Morell, whose lofty confidence has once more changed into heart-breaking dread, loses all power over himself and in a suffocating voice—the appeal bursting from the depths of his anguish—cries "Candida!"

"Coward!" shrieks Eugene, divining the victory in the surrender. And Candida—O most virtuous of wives!—says blandly, "I give myself to the weaker of the two" and falls into her husband's arms. It is a situation that

struck the first night audience at the Berkeley Lyceum as one eminently agreeable and refined.

As Shaw explains, the poet, despite the fact that "his face whitens like steel in a furnace that cannot melt it," is a gainer by Candida's choice. He enters the Morell home a sentimental boy yearning for an emotional outlet. He leaves it a man who has shouldered his cross and felt the unutterable stimulus of sacrifice. Candida makes a man of him, says Shaw, by showing him his strength. David finds that he must do without Uriah's wife.

The dramatist makes Candida essay a most remarkable analysis of her own motives. It is after Morell has reproached her, sick at heart and consumed by a nameless fear, to learn if Eugene's fiery onslaught has been born of any unrest that may be stirring within her. She explains freely and frankly, with more genuine honesty and self-revelation, perhaps, than she knows. Eugene, she says, is like a shivering beggar asking for her shawl. He needs love but scarcely knows it, and she conceives it her duty to teach him the value of love, that no worse woman may teach him its pains later on.

"Will he forgive me," she says, "for not teaching him myself? For abandoning him to the bad women for the sake of my goodness—my purity, as you call it? Ah, James, how little you understand me, to talk of your confidence in my goodness and purity. *I would give them both to Eugene as willingly as I would give my*

shawl to a beggar dying of cold, if there was nothing else to restrain me . . ."

"Here," says Huneker, "is one of the most audacious speeches in any modern play. It has been passed over by most critics who saw in 'Candida' merely an attempt to make a clergyman ridiculous, not realizing that the theme is profound and far-reaching, the question put being no more or no less than: Shall a married man expect his wife's love without working for it, without deserving it?" To this may be added another and more familiar question: May not the woman who lives in the odor of sanctity be more thoroughly immoral, at heart, than the worst of her erring sisters?

The play has a number of extremely exciting "grand" scenes and in general is admirably suitable for public performance. The minor characters are but three in number—Candida's wine-buying vulgarian of a father, Morell's curate and Proserpine, his typewriter. Proserpine is admirable, and her hopeless love for Morell —a complaint not uncommon among the women he knows—gives the play a note of homely sentiment that keeps it to earth.

As a piece of workmanship "Candida" is Shaw at his best; as a study in the workings of the feminine mind it deserves to rank with some of the best plays the modern stage has to offer.

"HOW HE LIED TO HER HUSBAND"

"HOW He Lied to Her Husband" is a one-act bit of foolery that Shaw wrote for Arnold Daly after "Candida" had made a success in New York. It was presented for the first time on the evening of Sept. 26, 1904, and during the ensuing week was more vociferously discussed than any other one-act play that ever graced the boards of an American theater.

As he made fun of the vaporing Ibsenites of the early '90's in "The Philanderer," just so Shaw got his joke at the expense of his own ecstatic followers in this little appendix to "Candida." The latter had been presented with huge profit, and thousands of honest playgoers, alert for mysterious "symbolism" and subtle "purposes" had seen in its heroine a great many of the qualities they formerly sought and discovered in the much-mauled Ibsen women. Candida, in brief, became the high priestess of the advanced cult, in all its warring denominational variety. It became a sign of intellectual vigor to go to the Berkeley Lyceum and compare her with Nora Helmer, Hedda Gabler and their company. And so Shaw indited "How He Lied to Her Husband."

The characters in the little farce are a fashionable

young poet named Henry Upjohn, an untamed American husband named Bumpus, and his wife, Aurora Bumpus, a young woman with yearnings. Aurora and Henry have seen a performance of "Candida" and have come away with a feeling that an intrigue after the fashion of Candida and Eugene, is one of those things that no really advanced poet or modern wife should be without. So Henry writes a sheaf of sonnets to Aurora and being determined to play the game according to the rules, proposes that they run off together. They are about to depart, conscientiously leaving the Bumpus diamonds behind, when Aurora, at the brink of the precipice, draws back.

Meanwhile Bumpus happens upon Henry's sonnets and confronts the poet with the charge of having written them. Henry, determined to save Aurora, "lies like a gentleman"—and incidentally overdoes it. Bumpus, mistaking his well-meant prevarication for impolite indifference to Aurora's beauty, or denial of it, flies into a passion, and is on the point of soundly thrashing the amorous bard when Aurora stays his hand. Then Henry confesses, and Bumpus is so much pleased by the manner in which the sonnets celebrate his wife's charms that he offers to print them for private circulation among connoisseurs with broad margins and *de luxe* binding.

The play is built upon the lines of broad farce, and in New York it made an uproarious success. The encounter between Bumpus and Henry is extraordinarily

ludicrous. Aurora throughout is the typical enthusiast of the women's clubs—filled with vague longings and ambitions, but intensely practical and commonplace at bottom. Henry, during one of their tumultuous exchanges, is about to break her fan. She shrieks the warning that it cost a dollar. He ventures upon a dark, melodramatic oath. "How dare you swear in my presence?" she demands. "One would think you were my husband!"

A pretty bit of fooling, *à la* "The Wild Duck," "The Philanderer" and "Alice-Sit-by-the Fire." Shaw calls it "a warning to theater-goers." It is.

"YOU NEVER CAN TELL"

YOU Never Can Tell," like many of the dramas of Shakespeare, was made to order. Shaw wrote it in 1896 and he calls it "an attempt to comply with many requests for a play in which the much paragraphed "brilliancy" of "Arms and the Man" should be tempered by some consideration for the requirements of managers, in search of fashionable comedies for West End theaters. And so he laid the scene in England, and made all his characters English and kept as close to the earth as he could. But for all that, he failed to make a conventional parlor drama of it. Shaw is Shaw, and when he set out to build a comedy *à la mode* he evolved instead a tragedy covered with a sugar-coating of farce. On its face it is uproariously and irresistibly funny; beneath the surface there is as nasty an undercurrent as that of "Widowers' Houses."

Fergus Crampton, a wealthy English yacht builder, and his most marvellous family are the chief characters of the play. Years before the curtain rises Crampton and his wife agree to disagree and she packs off to Madeira with their three babies—two girls and a boy. Subscribing to the heterodox doctrine that a married woman is entitled to her own home, her own pocket-book and her own name, Mrs. Crampton assumes the cog-

nomen of Clandon, bestows it upon her offspring and brings them up in complete ignorance of the existence of their paternal progenitor. Also she rears them in strict accordance with her ultra-advanced ideas of independence and individualism. In all matters concerning the emotions and intellect, they have freedom. And so they become unconscionable egotists, disrespectful to their elders, self-willed and obstinate, and nuisances in general.

As the curtain rises we find the Clandons back in England. Happening into a small seaside town, Phil and Dolly, the younger of the three children, scrape an acquaintance with one Valentine, a struggling young dentist (and also a being with advanced views of human events), and Dolly has the honor of paying him his first fee. Through him they meet his landlord, an irascible old gentleman in a semi-nautical coat and an habitual frown. They invite both dentist and landlord to luncheon, and at the meal the discovery is made that the latter is none other than the long-lost Mr. Crampton. Like the leading comedian of a burlesque show afterpiece, Crampton is in consternation and shrieks "My wife!" in a hoarse stage whisper.

"You are very greatly changed," observes Mrs. Clandon-Crampton.

"I daresay," replies the wretched husband and father. "A man does change in eighteen years."

This much of the prologue being accomplished, the

personages proceed to the real business of the action. Crampton, outraged and disgusted beyond measure by the manners and dress of his progeny, demands that Phil and Dolly be given over to his care and custody on the ground that their mother is an unfit person to have the charge of them. Meanwhile Valentine, the dentist, has felt a yearning towards Gloria, the elder daughter, and Gloria, after surviving five previous sieges of her heart, looks upon him not unkindly. One brief interview, in fact, serves to advance him to a point whereat he may safely offer her a chaste caress. Her mother, greatly astonished by his easy victory over Gloria's battalions of modern principles, seeks an explanation. Valentine very blandly discusses the situation.

The duel of sex, he says, is much like the contest between the makers of guns and the makers of ship's armor. One year one is ahead and the next year the other. In the old days, he says, mothers taught their daughters old-fashioned methods of resisting the wiles of old-fashioned Romeos, and for a space this method of defense was successful. But by-and-by the Romeos learned its weak points, and the fond mammas of England had to devise some new armor. They hit upon scientific education, and for awhile it, too, was successful. But in the end the old story was repeated.

"What did the man do?" says Valentine. "Just what the artilleryman does—went one better than the woman—educated himself scientifically and beat her at that

game just as he had beaten her at the old one. I learned how to circumvent the Woman's Rights' woman before I was twenty-three . . ."

But before the play is done the philosophical duellist of sex finds himself the vanquished rather than the victor. He begins to have doubts about his preparedness for the marriage state and essays a polite withdrawal. But Gloria, weighted with the wisdom of five previous amorous encounters, is no easy adversary to lose.

"Be sensible," says the valiant Valentine. "It's no use. I haven't a penny in the world."

"Can't you earn one?" demands Gloria. "Other people do."

Valentine, scenting a chance to flee, is half-delighted, half-frightened.

"I never could!" he declares. "You'd be unhappy . . . My dearest love, I should be the merest fortune-hunting adventurer if——"

She grips his arm and kisses him.

"Oh, Lord!" he gasps. "O, I——"

The trap has sprung and he is caught fast.

"I don't know anything about women," wails the duellist of sex, pathetically. "Twelve years' experience is not enough."

William, the waiter at the hotel, reads the moral.

"You never can tell, sir," he says, "You never can tell."

So much for the love making, which you will find,

in slightly different form in "Widowers' Houses" and "Man and Superman." The battle between the Cramptons, husband and wife, is a more serious thing. In some mysterious way the dramatist manages to keep the spectator from sympathizing with either, but Crampton, nevertheless, is a character in a tragedy and not in a comedy. It is all a ghastly horror to him—the flight of his wife, the cynical, worldwise impudence and grotesque individualism of his children, the perversity and topsy-turveyness of the whole domestic drama. He is no martyr, by any means, for life in his company, it is evident, would be an excellent imitation of existence in a cage with a tiger, but if he is not lovable, he at least has a great capacity for loving. He and Gloria have a memorable encounter, in which she explains her theory of conduct in detail.

"You see," she says triumphantly, at the end, "everything comes right if we only *think* it resolutely out."

"No," says Crampton sullenly, "I don't think. I want you to feel: that's the only thing that can help us. . . ."

In the end he succumbs to the inevitable senilely.

"Ho! ho! He! he! he!" he laughs, as Gloria bears Valentine away. And then, say the stage directions, "he goes into the garden, chuckling at the fun."

Somehow the boundless humor of the play is forgotten long before this undercurrent of ironic pathos.

William, the waiter, is one of Shaw's most delightful characters. He is, in truth, the chorus to the drama, and a man of deep philosophies. To everyone's consternation it is discovered that the eminent Mr. Bohun, Q. C., who is called in as legal adviser to the Clandon-Cramptons is William's son.

"I've often wished he was a potman," he says. "Would have had him off my hands ever so much sooner, sir. Yes, sir, had to support him until he was thirty-seven, sir. . . ."

William reads Schopenhauer, but he has no intellectual yearnings.

"My name is Boon, sir," he says, "though I am best known down here as Balmy Walters, sir. By rights I should spell it with the aitch you, sir, but I think it best not to take that liberty, sir. There is Norman blood in it, sir, and Norman blood is not a recommendation to a waiter."

Bohun, the son, is a blustering, roaring legal whale of the low comedy type. The last act of the play is made a screaming farce by his elephantine efforts to smooth out the family tangles of the Clandon-Cramptons. In the end he reaches a decision worthy of Solomon.

"You can do nothing," he says to Crampton, "but make a friendly arrangement. If you want your family more than they want you, you'll get the worst of the arrangement; if they want you more than you want them,

you'll get the better of it. The strength of their position lies in their being very agreeable personally. The strength of your position lies in your income. . . ."

And that is the nearest approach to a solution of the difficulty that the play offers.

"MAN AND SUPERMAN"

MEASURED with rule, plumb-line or hay-scales, "Man and Superman" is easily Shaw's *magnum opus.* In bulk it is brobdignagian; in scope it is stupendous; in purpose it is one with the Odyssey. Like a full-rigged ship before a spanking breeze, it cleaves deep into the waves, sending ripples far to port and starboard, and its giant canvases rise half way to the clouds, with resplendent jibs, sky-sails, staysails and studdingsails standing out like quills upon the fretful porcupine. It has a preface as long as a campaign speech; an interlude in three scenes, with music and red fire; and a complete digest of the German philosophers as an appendix. With all its rings and satellites it fills a tome of 281 closely-printed pages. Its epigrams, quips, jests, and quirks are multitudinous; it preaches treason to all the schools; its hero has one speech of 350 words. No one but a circus press agent could rise to an adequate description of its innumerable marvels. It is a three-ring circus, with Ibsen doing running high jumps; Schopenhauer playing the calliope and Nietzsche selling peanuts in the reserved seats. And all the while it is the most entertaining play of its generation.

Maybe Shaw wrote it in a vain effort to rid himself

at one fell swoop of all the disquieting doctrines that infested his innards. Into it he unloaded Kropotkin, Noyes, Bakounin, Wilde, Marx, Proudhon, Nietzsche, Netschajew, Wagner, Bunyan, Mozart, Shelley, Ibsen, Morris, Tolstoi, Goethe, Schopenhauer, Plato—seized them by the heels and heaved them in, with a sort of relieved "God help you!" The result is 281 pages of most diverting farce—farce that only half hides the tumultuous uproar of the two-and-seventy jarring sects beneath it. It is a tract cast in an encyclopedic and epic mold—a stupendous, magnificent colossal effort to make a dent in the cosmos with a slapstick.

> Why, all the saints and sages who discuss'd
> Of the Two Worlds so learnedly, are thrust
> Like foolish Prophets forth: their Words to Scorn
> Are scatter'd, and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.

Shaw explains that he wrote the play in response to a suggestion by A. B. Walkley, the dramatic critic of the London *Times* that he should tackle the subject of Don Juan. In his 37-page preface he traces, at length, the process of reasoning which led him to the conclusion that Juan, as he was depicted by the fathers, was a fraud and an impostor. In the business of mating, he says (after Schopenhauer) it is not the man but the woman that does the pursuing. Man's function in life is that of food-getting. Woman's is that of perpetuating the race. Hence man's ordinary occupation is making money, and

woman's is getting married. To protect himself against "a too aggressive prosecution of woman's business," he says, man has "set up a feeble romantic convention that the initiative in sex business must always come from him." But the pretense is so shallow "that even in the theater, that last sanctuary of unreality, it imposes only on the inexperienced. In Shakespeare's plays the woman always takes the initiative. In his problem plays and his popular plays alike the love interest is the interest of seeing the woman hunt the man down."

And so, the hero of this new play, John Tanner (our old friend Juan Tenorio) is the pursued, and Doña Ana (Miss Ann Whitefield) is the pursuer. John is a being of most advanced and startling ideas. He writes a volume called "The Revolutionist's Handbook and Pocket Companion," full of all sorts of strange doctrines, from praise of the Oneida Community to speculations regarding the probable characteristics of the Superman. He laughs at honor, titles, the law, property, marriage, liberty, democracy, the golden rule and everything else that God-fearing folks hold sacred; he has a good word for Czolgosz; he gives directions for beating children; he curls his lip at civilization; he ventures the view that "every man over forty is a scoundrel." And then, with all this cargo of nonconformity afloat in his hold, fate sends him sailing into a haven of staunch orthodoxy.

He and Roebuck Ramsden, a gentleman who hangs

Herbert Spencer's portrait on his library wall as a sort of banner of his intellectual modernity, are appointed guardians for Ann, whose papa has just passed away, and John, to protect himself against being caught in ambush by the Life Force, as represented in his ward, endeavors to marry her off to Octavius Robinson, a harmless young man who has lived beneath her father's roof since his childhood. John is aware of the faults of Ann and has no yearning to be enmeshed in her web. He notices that she is a liar and politely calls her attention to the fact; he observes her pursuit of him and makes open preparations for flight. Finally, in full cry, he runs away in an automobile across Europe. But the Life Force is more powerful than gasoline, and Ann, yielding to its irresistible impulse, follows him—across the English channel, to Dover, and across France toward the Mediterranean. In the Sierra Nevada mountains she brings her game to bay and in old Grenada poor John receives his *coup de grace.* Thus he sinks to earth:

Tanner. . . . The trap was laid from the beginning.

Ann (*concentrating all her magic*). From the beginning—from our childhood—for both of us—by the Life Force.

Tanner. I will not marry you. I will not marry you.

Ann. Oh, you will, you will.

Tanner. I tell you, no, no, no.

Ann. I tell you, yes, yes, yes.

Tanner. No.

Ann (*coaxing—imploring—almost exhausted*). Yes. Before it is too late for repentance. Yes.

Tanner (struck by an echo from the past). When did all this happen to me before? Are we two dreaming?

Ann (suddenly losing her courage, with an anguish that she does not conceal). No. We are awake and you have said no: that is all.

Tanner (brutally). Well?

Ann. Well, I made a mistake, you do not love me.

Tanner (seizing her in his arms). It is false: I love you. The Life Force enchants me: I have the whole world in my arms when I clasp you. . . .

And this is the story upon which Shaw hangs his 175 pages of play—it would take seven hours to perform it in its entirety—his thirty-seven pages of introduction, and his sixty-nine pages of appendix.

The conflict between Tanner and the ethics and traditions represented by Ramsden is riotously and irresistibly humorous. The first act of the play, indeed, is the most gorgeously grotesque in all Shaw. Better fun is scarcely imaginable. The famous Hell scene, which forms a sort of movable third act, is also a masterpiece of comedy. Tanner during his flight from Ann, is captured by a band of social-anarchist brigands, led by one Capt. Mendoza, a sentimental Anglo-Hebrew. Mendoza's story of his unrequited love for an English lass sends Tanner to dreamland, and he dreams that he is in Hell. And then an elaborately comic play within a play is performed. Mendoza appears as the Devil; Tanner as Don Juan; and Ann as Doña Ana de Ulloa. It is long, this episode, and beyond all hope of boiling down,

but the persons who see " Man and Superman " without it miss two-thirds of the drama. An excellent exposition by the Devil of the superiority of Hell over Heaven forms part of it. During the rest of the action the characters discuss every imaginable subject, from love to the higher morality.

" Whatever they say of me in churches on earth," says the Devil, " I know that it is universally admitted in good society that the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman; and that is enough for me. . . ."

In the first act Violet Robinson, Octavius' sister, gives her family an overwhelming shock by passing to that moral bourne whence no feminine traveler returns. Her maiden aunt is for turning her out of doors. Ramsden is apoplectic. Octavius is speechless. The scandal is appalling. And here comes Tanner's chance. He has preached against marriage and now he will follow his preaching with practise. Virtuous or unvirtuous, what are the odds? The Life Force is at it again, and he, John Tanner, is its champion. So he goes to Violet's rescue grandly—a hero, every inch of him.

" They think to blame you," he says loftily, " by their silly superstitions about morality and propriety and so forth. But I know, and the whole world really knows, that you are right to follow your instinct; that vitality and bravery are the greatest qualities a woman can have, and motherhood her solemn initiation into womanhood, and that the fact of your not being legally married mat-

ters not one scrap either to your own worth or to our real regard for you."

The limelight flashes here, but suddenly it goes out and Violet's eyes flash instead.

"Oh!" she exclaims, "you think me a wicked woman, like the rest! You think that I am not only vile, but that I share your abominable opinions. . . . I won't bear such a horrible insult. . . . I have kept my marriage secret for my husband's sake. But now I claim my right as a married woman not to be insulted. . . ."

And as Tanner wilts his fine theories come crashing down about his head.

The play is such a gigantic, ponderous thing that any effort to summarize it is difficult. The central idea—that, in mating, the man is pursued by the woman—is one that we have seen Shaw employ in "Arms and the Man," "The Philanderer," and other plays. As he himself says, it is not a new conception. Shakespeare had it, though maybe unconsciously, and its rudiments appear in the works of other men. Schopenhauer made it classical. In "Man and Superman" Shaw uses it as an excuse for airing practically every radical doctrine in the modern repertoire. "The general impression of the book," says Huneker, "causes us to believe there is a rift in the writer's lute; not in his mentality, but in his own beliefs, or scepticisms. Perhaps Shaw no longer pins his faith to Shaw." Herein the critic makes the common mistake of confusing the dramatist and the

theorist. Shaw borrows part of the title from Nietzsche and makes sad sport of the mad German in many a scene, but that is no evidence that he is insincere when, in his introduction, he classes Nietzsche with those writers " whose peculiar sense of the world I recognize as more or less akin to my own." " The Revolutionist's Handbook and Pocket Companion " at the end of the play is given, he says, merely to prove that John Tanner, its author, is really the revolutionist and genius the drama makes him out to be. Too often, says Shaw, a playwright is content to say that his hero is a man of parts without offering any tangible evidence of the fact.

All in all, " Man and Superman " is a work worth the two years of effort the title page hints it cost the author. But it is a pity that Shaw didn't divide it into two plays, a volume of essays, two dozen magazine articles and a book of epigrams. The age of the epic is past. To-day we sacrifice Fortinbras to get " Hamlet " into two hours and a half.

"JOHN BULL'S OTHER ISLAND"

THIS is a political satire in Shaw's most amusing manner and, as its title indicates, deals with the eternal Irish question—a problem that, in England, rivals in perennial interest the dispute between capital and labor in the United States. The author, with characteristic impartiality, gives all sides a fair hearing, and " though in the end," says A. B. Walkley, " all parties are dismissed with costs, we have a conviction that justice has been done."

Two London engineers—Broadbent, an Englishman, and Larry Doyle, an anglicized Irishman—are the central characters. Broadbent is a political radical and insatiable reformer of a very familiar sort. Yearning to lend a hand in the uplifting of humanity, he turns to the martyred Irish and proposes to be their champion, without in the least understanding them. Doyle, on the other hand, looks upon all reform as so much moonshine. As far as he is concerned, Ireland may go hang. He is neither a patriot nor an altruist.

Nevertheless, when Broadbent decides to go to Ireland to study the problem of saving the Irish on the ground, Doyle consents to go with him, and together they arrive at a primitive sort of Irish village. There they make acquaintance with the folks who constitute

suffering Ireland—an unfrocked priest whose mysticism has given him the local character of a lunatic, a peasant fairly savage in his simple superstitions, the fanatical parish priest and other types more or less familiar. To Doyle they are commonplace bores. To Broadbent they constitute a People yearning for a Moses.

When Doyle refuses to stand for Parliament for the district, Broadbent willingly steps into the breach, and in the ensuing campaign all the multitudinous facets of the Irish question are revealed. The honest electors, misunderstanding Broadbent's altruistic efforts for their welfare, get a great deal of innocent enjoyment out of his orations and a great deal more out of his honest efforts to deal with them as freeman to freeman. He offers to take a farmer's pig home in his motor car. The car runs over the pig and, in addition, knocks out the window of the village china shop. "There is a jest in every line," says the critic of the London *Daily Mail.* "The play exists for and by the comic spirit alone."

In the end, after many farcical situations and excellent quips, the canny Irish yeomanry accept Broadbent as a profitable acquaintance, and as the novelty of his misunderstood good intentions dies, come to regard him more or less seriously. As the curtain falls they are looking forward with interest to certain very material boons he promises to confer upon them—a big hotel in the village, a new tower for the village landmark and links for the village golfers. Meanwhile he has fallen

in love with an old sweetheart of Doyle's and, after an uphill wooing, has supplanted the latter in the fair charmer's affections.

The play is a characteristically Shavian *reductio ad absurdum* of the vast ocean of hair-raising schemes and startling theories that has so long deluged the Irish question. Shaw himself is an Irishman, and no doubt the troubles of his native land are of some interest to him, despite his vigorous denial that he is a patriot. Probably the play indicates his subscription to the idea of many an Irishman whose emotionalism has been tempered by English common-sense: that Ireland must cease looking for relief without and seek it within. In so far as this is true, the play is dialectic. But first of all it is a farce by the dramatist whom one London critic, at least, calls "the best living writer of comedy."

"It's all rot," says Broadbent, the Englishman in the play, of some speech made by Doyle. "It's all rot, but it's so brilliant, you know."

"Here, no doubt," observed Mr. Walkley of the *Times,* "Shaw is slyly taking a side glance at the usual English verdict on his own works. The verdict will need some slight modification in the case of 'John Bull's Other Island.' For, in the first place, the play is not *all* rot. Further, it has some other qualities than mere brilliancy. It is at once a delight and a disappointment . . . Shaw takes up the empty bladders of life, the current commonplaces, the cant phrases, the windbags of rodo-

montade, the hollow conventions, and the sham sentiments; quietly he inserts his pin; and the thing collapses with a pop."

The play was given six special matinée performances at the London Court Theater in the latter part of 1904, and Arnold Daly has since presented it in America.

THE NOVELS AND OTHER WRITINGS

SHAW'S four published novels both suffer and gain by the widespread public interest in his plays; gain because this interest serves to keep them somewhat in the foreground, and suffer because, as the work of a very young man, they are ill-fitted to stand comparison with the literary offspring of his maturity. Of the four, "Love Among the Artists" is the best and "Cashel Byron's Profession" the most popular. "An Unsocial Socialist" is a wild extravaganza that has lived its day and done its task, and "The Irrational Knot" is forgotten. The author's first novel, written in his early twenties, has never seen the light. The publishers of that time would have none of it, and later on, when Shaw "copy" began to find a market and there even arose a mild demand for it, Shaw wisely decided that the yellowing manuscript should remain in the twilight of its tomb.

The hero of "Cashel Byron's Profession" has become one of the most familiar characters of latter-day fiction. References to him are made in the newspapers frequently and every time a star of the roped arena marries a chorus girl the love making of Mr. Byron is recalled. He was not the first bruiser to grace the pages of an English

romance—as admirers of "Pendennis" and *The Spectator* well know—but he has become, by long odds, the most conspicuous. It is to be deplored that Shaw did not save him for a play. "The Admirable Bashville," a burlesque dramatization of the novel, does not answer. Cashel should be the hero of a melodrama *a la* "Arms and the Man." What an opportunity he would give to our Greek god stars!

Cashel is the son of an actress and becoming tired of her variable moods and the exactions of his instructors, runs away from boarding school in England and journeys to Australia. There, by chance, he is taken into the household of Mr. "Ned" Skene, an eminent retired pugilist, as secretary and gymnasium assistant. The alert Skene discerns in him a rare "find" and before long he is back in England again, battling his way to fame and fortune.

Before long, through one Lord Worthington, a man of vast acquaintance and catholic taste, Cashel is introduced to the notice of Miss Lydia Carew, a young Englishwoman of huge fortune and most marvellous intellectuality. It is not until page 189—more than half way through the 330 page book—that Lydia learns that Cashel is a prize-fighter. Very naturally she recoils from him, but all the while, half-unconsciously, she has been falling desperately in love with him, and in the end, despite his profession, she marries him.

"I practically believe," she explains to his rejected

rival, "in the doctrine of heredity; and as my body is frail and my brain morbidly active, I think my impulse toward a man strong in body and untroubled in mind is a trustworthy one. You can understand that; it is a plain proposition in eugenics."

And so Cashel retires from the ring and gradually, though never completely, takes on the polish of civilization. It is a union so happy that it soon descends into the commonplace.

The author was born with the dramatic instinct of a Sardou or a Hal Reid and throughout the book there are scenes of tremendous excitement and clatter. Cashel fights fairly terrific battles—among others one with Miss Carew's footman, Bashville, who also loves her—and the general air of the book is distinctly warlike. Most of the minor characters are commonplace. Skene and his wife and Lord Worthington are old friends from Thackeray and Lucian Webber, Lydia's cousin and unsuccessful Romeo, is the ready-made rising young statesman of contemporary English fiction.

"An Unsocial Socialist" is a tract born of the nights that Shaw passed in pondering the philosophies. All of the ten articles in the manifesto of 1845 are preached in it, and in addition there is much that the Hon. "Tom" Watson, the Hon. Eugene Debs, and various other earnest gentlemen were destined to spout forth years later. "I suppose," says Max Beerbohm, "that there is not under heaven a subject on which Shaw has not

thought deeply and indignantly." "An Unsocial Socialist" justifies this venture. It is the most riotous hodge-podge of cart-tail oratory and low comedy in the language.

Sidney Trefusis, a millionaire, takes to wife Henriette Jansenius, the daughter of a millionaire, and after a brief honeymoon bids her good-bye. He is no ordinary money-king, this strange young man, but a Rothschild with the ideas of a Marx. The times, he decides, are out of joint. Things have grown rotten in Denmark. To live as men of his fortune live would be to give his tacit consent to the immoral scheme of things. And so he deserts his wife, assumes the name of Smilash, and going to a small country town, sets up shop as the local jack-of-all-trades.

From this point on, for a hundred pages, the book is a socialist tract. To his wife, who pursues him, and to everyone else he encounters—the faculty and student body of a refined young ladies' seminary, the village politicians, chance passersby, enemies, and friends—he expounds his theories. Also—and this is what makes him rise from the common level of propagandists—he practices many (though not all) of the things he preaches. In the end, his neglect kills his wife and he goes ranging England in search of a real affinity. When he finds her he marries her and the book ends—with a most marvellous letter from the hero to the author.

As in the case of "The Philanderer" a great many

persons have wondered how Shaw could make such a ridiculous character of a man whose doctrines apparently coincide with his own. In truth, it is highly improbable that Shaw, or any other sane man, ever held to the ideas expressed by Trefusis. The latter's speech beside the corpse of his wife is without parallel in fiction. And some of his other utterances and acts—how royally and deliciously sacrilegious they are! Certainly an age that finds Schopenhaüer's essay on women a never-ending delight should be better acquainted with the ecstatic shocks of "An Unsocial Socialist." Trefusis, being utterly beyond the pale, is as productive of wicked little thrills to the orthodox and virtuous as McIntosh Jelladudin, David, Pantagruel, or the latest popular murderer.

"The Irrational Knot"—the theme of which is evident from the title—is now but a name. It was one of a vast multitude of similar books that saw the light at the time of its birth. Not one of the reviewers, eulogists or enemies of Shaw seems to think much of it. "Love Among the Artists," on the contrary, is a novel that deserves to rank with the really important fiction of the time. The theme is not startlingly original and in the 400-odd pages there are oceans of tiresome talk, but the work, as a whole, bears the stamp of distinction, and if only for the admirable searching portrait of the Polish *pianiste,* Aurélie Szczympliça, it deserves some share of attention.

The story has the amiably discursive cast of the other

Shaw stories and ill bears translation into a brief summary. Adrian Herbert, an artist, is a character about whom others, in a sense, revolve, though, in himself, he is little interesting. At the start he is affianced to Mary Sutherland, a young woman of artistic longings. The chief business of the book is to show how he is won away from Mary by the Szszympliça and duly and regularly married by that remarkable young woman. As for Mary, she finds consolation in the arms of John Hoskyn, an eminently practical and matter-of-fact gentleman, who wanders into Bohemia quite by accident, and is much astonished by what he sees there.

Shaw was a newcomer in Bohemia himself when he wrote this book and to this fact may be ascribed the freshness and virility of some of the characters—the Szczympliça in particular, and Owen Jack, the eccentric composer. In the former the vagaries of the artistic mind are revealed with considerable originality and delicacy. If he was tempted to make a burlesque of the soulful little Aurélie, he kept a tight rein upon the impulse. Jack, on the contrary, is frankly a figure out of low comedy. Nothing more grotesque than his struggles with the Philistines is to be found in any of the Shaw plays. Like Cashel Byron, he and Aurélie deserve to be translated from the closet to the stage. Jack especially is sufficiently obvious to give any comedian of fair talents the opportunity of a lifetime.

Shaw's pair of critical pamphlets—"The Perfect

Wagnerite" and "The Quintessence of Ibsenism"—will go down into history beside Robert Schumann's early reviews of the compositions of Chopin and Huxley's opening broadsides for Darwin. Each paved the way for better knowledge and better understanding. In 1888, when "The Perfect Wagnerite" was published, the composer of "The Ring of the Nibelung" was still caviare to the Britons. The professors of the day knew him and feared that the great gaping public would come to know him, and so, like the ancient monks who kept the Scriptures under lock and key, they greatly desired that he be ignored. Shaw undertook the vain task of proving the younger Siegfried a socialist—and succeeded in making his readers meditate upon Wagner. Thus he earned whatever money and fame he got from his pains.

"The Quintessence of Ibsenism" includes some wonderfully illuminative and searching passages, but on the whole it is rather out of date. Shaw makes the Norwegian a social-philosopher of most earnest purposes, and hangs upon the book an elaborate and ingenious theory of sham-smashing. As a matter of fact, we have Ibsen's own word for it that few of his plays contain much conscious preaching, and no doubt many of the alarming doctrines Shaw found in them were not there before he conjured them up. Nevertheless, the book remains the best estimate of Ibsen yet written in English.

Incidentally, it gave birth to the tumultuous discussion of the so-called "symbolic" play which raged over

England and America half a dozen years ago. Nowadays one hears little of "symbolism" and even the comic papers have ceased to regard Ibsen and his company as men who write in mysterious cryptograms. But persons who follow the trend of things dramatic remember the disputations that once awoke the echoes. You will find the germ of them in Shaw's half-forgotten discourses upon "Brand," "Peer Gynt," and "Emperor and Galilean."

In the early '90's, when Max Nordau's mighty tome, "Degeneration," was making a stir like a new best-selling novel, Shaw published a counter-blast to it. Even exceeding Nordau in the minuteness of his knowledge, he made an answer that, in the words of one admirer, "wiped Nordau off the field of discussion." Unhappily, this effort at regeneration has been forgotten with "Degeneration."

Shaw's remarkable essay "On Going to Church," which was recently republished in book form, is an earnest plea for less humbug in public worship. The average church, he argues, is so hopelessly ugly, tawdry, and irritating, that it straightway dissipates any religious emotion the stray comer may harbor when he enters.

The socialistic and political essays, while by no means unimportant to the students of the Shaw plays, are scarcely within the province of this book.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND STATISTICAL

I

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW was born in Dublin, July 26, 1856. His paternal grandfather, Bernard Shaw, was high sheriff of County Kilkenny, and his maternal grandfather, Walter Bagnall Gurley, a county 'squire and fox hunter, with an extensive, but entailed estate. Shaw's father was a younger son and, in consequence, no millionaire. But that he was a pauper or that the dramatist, in his youth, was attracted to vegetarianism because, as James Huneker hints, cabbages are cheaper than venison, there is no reason to believe. When the family came to London, in 1876, it took up quarters in "a well furnished house in a pleasant part" of the city. This upon the authority of Mr. Stanley Shaw, a relative, in a letter to the New York *Sun,* dated Berlin, April 25, 1905.

The Shaws then, were country gentlemen, and in all probability little different from the other Irish gentry about them. The son of the younger son was educated and reared in the orthodox fashion. He learned the speech of the Irish aristocracy and the foreign tongues

in favor—English, French, and maybe a bit of German; he mastered the three R's, he studied the history of his country, and went to church. "When I was a little boy," he says in his essay "On Going to Church," "I was compelled to go on Sunday; and though I escaped from that intolerable bondage before I was ten, it prejudiced me so violently against church-going that twenty years elapsed before, in foreign lands and in pursuit of works of art, I became once more a church-goer. To this day, my flesh creeps when I recall that genteel suburban Irish Protestant church, built by Roman Catholic workmen who would have considered themselves damned had they crossed its threshold afterward. . . ." A virtuous, commonplace family. Its present head, says the Mr. Stanley Shaw aforesaid, "is Major Sir Frederick Shaw, Bart., D. S. O. of Bushey Park, Dublin." A respectable, well-sounding name and address.

II

Shaw was twenty when he reached London—the meditative, impressionable, speculative, iconoclastic age. Apparently he fell an easy prey to the philosophical anarchists who then held the centre of the stage—Proudhon, Lassalle, Marx, Louis Blanc, Engels, Liebknecht, and the lesser Germans. Certainly it was a day of stimulating stirring about. Huxley and Spencer were up to their necks in gore; Ibsen, with "The League of Youth" behind him, was giving form to "The Pillars of Society"

and "A Doll's House"; Nietzsche was tramping up and down his garden path; Wagner was hard at work; "The Principles of Sociology" had just come from the press. Sham-smashing was in the air. Everything respectable was under suspicion.

It didn't take Shaw long to spring out of the audience upon the stage. His first novel, in truth, must have been begun long before he learned to find his way about the streets of London. Whether it was good or bad the human race will never know; publishers declined it without thanks, and the author, when his manuscripts began to have a value, decided that it should remain unpublished. "It was a very remarkable work," he says, "but hardly one which I should be well advised in letting loose whilst my livelihood depends on my credit as a literary workman. I can recall a certain difficulty, experienced even while I was writing the book, in remembering what it was about . . ." Thus heavily did his theme bear down upon him.

What the young Irishman did to relieve his imagination during the next three years is not recorded. That he learned a great deal, particularly of music and literature, is very probable. His sister was a professional singer, and the persons he met were chiefly of the literary-artistic sort. He was "but an infant of twenty-four, when, being at that time one of the unemployed" he essayed to mend his "straitened fortunes" by writing his second novel, "The Irrational Knot." It was no

masterpiece, but if the few persons who glanced through it possessed prophetic eyes they must have seen in it marks of a genius rather startling. A year later came "Love Among the Artists"—a volume of nearly 500 pages. Then, in order, came "Cashel Byron's Profession" and "An Unsocial Socialist." Not one of these extraordinary tales struck the fancy of the publishers. "An encouraging compliment or two," says Shaw, was his sole reward for the fatiguing labor of writing them. Not until a good while afterward did any of the five see the light, and then it was only "to fill up the gaps in socialist magazines financed by generous friends." "An Unsocial Socialist" was the first to reach the dignity of covers. After it came "Cashel Byron's Profession" and "The Irrational Knot." "Love Among the Artists" was the last to appear upon the book stalls.

III

Meanwhile Shaw had become engaged in half a dozen reform crusades. Vegetarianism found in him an early advocate and socialism won him easily. In 1883, the year Karl Marx died, Thomas Davidson, an American, laid the foundation of the Fabian Society at a series of parlor conferences in London. In 1884 Shaw joined the society, and four years later, when it began holding public meetings, he found himself one of its leading lights. He has told us himself how he delighted to indulge in eloquent socialistic orations from cart-tails and how he came

to acquire a bodyguard of faithful auditors whose presence was assured whenever it was announced that he would speak. With the pen, too, he labored for the manifesto of 1845, and even to-day he is still hard at it—despite prosperity, the approach of middle age and a fair imitation of the thing called fame. He wrote tracts in great number and after 1889 edited the Fabian Essays. Incidentally he wrote " Fabianism and the Empire " (1900), " Fabianism and the Fiscal Question " (1904), and other socialistic broadsides. At odd moments he had his say, too, upon the subjects of vegetarianism, the use of quotation marks, capitalization, evening clothes, capital punishment, and the eternal snobbishness of the patriotic Britisher.

During all this time he was drawn nearer and nearer to the theater. As far back as 1885 he began a play in collaboration with William Archer, the translator of Ibsen. This drama, rewritten and amplified seven years later, was the first of his works to be performed in public. But the need of getting on in the world pressed gloomily. " The question was," Shaw has told us, " how to get a pound a week." Novel writing was plainly hopeless and play making seemed equally impossible. There remained a chance to set up shop as a critic. Shaw made the plunge and amost immediately his humor and originality won him an audience. " Soon," he says, " my privileges were enormous and my wealth immense. . . . The classes patiently read my essays; the masses

patiently listened to my harangues. I enjoyed the immunities of impecuniosity with the opportunities of a millionaire. . . ."

At the start Shaw's regular topic was the art pictorial, but before long he began to dabble in music. According to Max Beerbohm, his first essay was printed in the first number of the *Star* in 1888. This was a highly purposeful periodical, founded by T. P. O'Connor ("If we enable the charwoman to put two lumps of sugar in her tea instead of one," said "Tay Pay," in his salutatory, "we shall not have worked in vain"), and Shaw wrote over the *nom de plume* of "Corno di Bassetto." In 1890, after two years' service, he transferred his flag to the *World*. Then, like his friend Huneker, he abandoned music for the drama, and from January, 1895, to May, 1898, he was the critic of the *Saturday Review*—the London weekly in whose columns the ingenious Mr. Beerbohm now holds forth.

IV

As has been noted, "Widowers' Houses," Shaw's first play, was completed in 1892. It was given its initial performance during that year at the Royalty Theater, London, by the Independent Theater Company, and made a rather strenuous success. "The socialists and independents," says Shaw, "applauded me furiously on principle; the ordinary play-going first-nighters hooted me frantically on the same ground; I, being at that

time in some practice as what might be unpolitely called a mob-orator, made a speech before the curtain; the newspapers discussed the play for a whole fortnight, not only in the ordinary theatrical notices and criticisms, but in leading articles and letters; and finally the text of the play was published, with an introduction by Mr. Grein (the manager of the Independent Company), an amusing account by Mr. Archer of the original collaboration, and a long preface and several elaborate controversial appendices in the author's most energetically egotistical fighting style."

"The Philanderer" was written in 1893, also for the Independent Theater, and "Mrs. Warren's Profession" was completed the same year. The former was withdrawn because it was found well-nigh impossible to unearth actors capable of understanding it sufficiently to play it, and the latter remained in the manager's desk because the virtuous English play-censor forbade its performance. Nine years later—January 12, 1902—it was presented privately by the Stage Society.

In 1894 a group of philanthropic play-goers, convinced that the dramas of the day were intolerable, financed a series of special performances at the Avenue Theater, London. The second play presented was Shaw's "Arms and the Man." It was given its premiere April 21, and ran until July 7. Shaw, in his preface to the second volume of "Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant" enters upon an elaborate account of its receipts and the

philosophy thereof. During its brief season the Londoners paid $8,500 to see it and the cost of presenting it, counting salaries, rents, lights, advertising, and royalties, was nearly $25,000. Soon afterwards Richard Mansfield presented the play in the United States and it made a very fair success. It is in the Mansfield repertoire even to-day, and now and then there is a matinée performance of it. But apparently the public does not very vigorously demand it. In translation it has been done in Germany.

"The Man of Destiny" was written in 1895. Two years later it was given one performance at Croydon, England. Then it slumbered until the last months of 1904, when Arnold Daly played it in New York as an after-piece to "Candida." Since then his company has appeared in it in most of the large cities of the United States. "Candida" and "You Never Can Tell" were written in 1896. The former was first played by the Independent Theater Company, during a tour of the English provinces, in 1897. Arnold Daly, scraping together $300, presented it, in association with Winchell Smith, at the Berkeley Lyceum, a diminutive theater in West 45th street, New York, in 1904. The success of the drama was so great that before long Daly found himself a Broadway star under the management of Liebler & Co., and at present it seems likely that Shaw's plays will serve to keep him in the public eye for a good while to come.

Shaw wrote a one-act piece, "How He Lied to Her Husband," for his young American interpreter, and when it was presented in New York, in the fall of 1904, it made a great stir. "You Never Can Tell," which had been withdrawn by Shaw after being placed in rehearsal in London, was given at the Garrick Theater by Daly at the conclusion of the run of "Candida." The two volumes of "Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant" were published in 1898. They included "Widowers' Houses," "The Philanderer," "Mrs. Warren's Profession," "Arms and the Man," "You Never Can Tell," "Candida," and "The Man of Destiny"—not to speak of a 37-page preface dealing with a vast multitude of subjects.

V.

"The Devil's Disciple," the first of the "Three Plays for Puritans," was written early in 1897. Richard Mansfield presented it in New York in the fall of that year and it made an excellent success. Like "Arms and the Man" it is still in his repertoire—pretty far down in the trunk, it may be mentioned in passing, with many other plays atop of it. In October, 1899, Murray Carson's company played it for a few weeks at Kensington, near London. "Cæsar and Cleopatra" was written in 1898, and "Capt. Brassbound's Conversion" the next year. The "Three Plays for Puritans" were published in 1900. "The Admirable Bashville, or Constancy Rewarded"

was given by the Stage Society at the Imperial Theatre in 1903. Shaw evolved it from the fragments of "Cashel Byron's Profession" to protect his rights in the latter, an unauthorized dramatization having been made for an American pugilist-actor. The play was printed as an appendix to the second English edition of "Cashel Byron's Profession."

"Man and Superman" was written in 1902, and published the next year, with a gigantic preface, and "The Revolutionist's Handbook and Pocket Companion" as an appendix. Preface, play, and appendix make a volume of 244 closely-printed pages. The drama saw the light on the evening of May 23, 1905, at the Court Theater, London. Granville Barker, made up to resemble Shaw, played the role of John Tanner, and Miss Lillian McCarthy was the Ann Whitefield. May 21 and 22 there were special performances of the play by the Stage Society, and in September, 1905, Robert Loraine and his company presented it in New York. The third act with the scene of Don Juan in Hell was omitted. "John Bull's Other Island" was completed in 1904, and presented at six special matinees at the Court Theater by the Stage Society in the fall of that year. "Major Barbara" was written in 1905.

Shaw's two critical tracts, "The Perfect Wagnerite" and "The Quintessence of Ibsenism" were published in 1888 and 1891, respectively. His last scholastic manifesto, "The Common Sense of Municipal Training" was

issued in 1904. A remarkable essay, "On Going to Church," which appeared originally in the *Savoy Quarterly*—Arthur Symons' journal—in 1896, was reprinted early in 1905, and attained a large sale. In the late '80's, in an English periodical, there appeared his celebrated answer to Max Nordau's book, "Degeneration." In the opinion of some of his admirers this is, by far, the best of his controversial works, but, unfortunately, it has not been reprinted in permanent form.

"When Arnold Daly visited Shaw," says Gustav Kobbé, "he found several indications that cynicism and Fabian socialism are not unprofitable. Shaw lives in large apartments in the New Reform Club, overlooking the Thames embankment, and he has a country place at Welwin, too. . . . There is no sham in the interior of his places of abode. There is a complete absence of the cheap æsthetic or of superfluous ornamentation. Simplicity of outline distinguishes such ornaments as there are. Handles, incrustations and the like are eschewed. Shaw explained to Daly that he wished nothing in his abode that would collect dust. Even rugs are tabooed. . . . Daly did not find the author a *poseur*, but simply a man who was not an ordinary man. . . ."

That Shaw has a keen eye to business a great many aspiring managers have discovered. He demands a royalty of 15 per cent. of the gross receipts of his plays—considerably more than all but the most famous dramatists receive—and is careful and unsentimental in his ne-

gotiations. That he is now basking in the sun of prosperity is very probable. Saving only Shakespeare, no English author was better represented in the productions of the winter of 1904-5. In addition Shaw is much in demand as a lecturer and has no difficulty in finding a publisher for whatever he chooses to write. In 1898 he inherited the entailed estate of his maternal grandfather, Walter Bagnall Gurley. He was married the same year to Miss Charlotte Frances Payne-Townshend.

" Who's Who " says that Shaw's favorite exercises are swimming and cycling and that his recreation is " anything except sport." He is tall, lanky, and wears a shaggy, red beard. He affects loose fitting flannel shirts and heaps his curses upon the dress suit. He is a vegetarian, a socialist, and many other things of a heterodox, fearsome sort. He uses the typewriter in preference to a pen, even for correspondence. He has travelled in Europe and the Levant, and may soon come to America. He refuses to use apostrophes in such words as don't and can't, and affects thin spacing, after the German style, instead of italics, to emphasize words. " Last season," says the sapient Mr. Daly, " he was a social freak; now he is a legitimate amuser (sic!) of the people."

And so much for George Bernard Shaw.

SHAKESPEARE AND SHAW

SHAW'S notion that Shakespeare's plays—or, at least, some of them—have been left behind by the evolution of popular philosophy and ideals is scarcely original with him. As he himself points out, the Bard of Avon has been burned in hot critical fire for many years, despite the "Shakespeare fanciers" who hold him as a god. Some of his plays, says Shaw, were so far ahead of their time when they were first presented that it has taken 300 years of theater-goers to tire of the "long line of disgraceful farces, melodramas, and stage-pageants which actor-managers, from Garrick and Cibber to our own contemporaries, have hacked out of them," and to understand performances of the texts as the poet wrote them. By the same token, those plays which Shakespeare himself "wrote down" to the level of his audience have grown archaic in sentiment and character. Dramas like "Anthony and Cleopatra," says Shaw, will nevermore be written, "nor relished by men in whose philosophy guilt and innocence, and, consequently, revenge and idolatry, have no meaning. Such men must rewrite all the old plays in terms of their own philosophy. . . ."

Shakespeare and Shaw

When this was published, as a preface to " Cæsar and Cleopatra," in "Three Plays for Puritans," there was a volcanic critical eruption, and ever since then the flames have roared about the ingenious Irishman. He has delivered lectures explaining his position, he has set forth his views, elaborately and carefully, in print, and his admirers have gone to his rescue—but a large party of Shakespeare worshipers insist on clinging to the belief that he has attempted to drag the bard from his pedestal and himself climb upon it. Recently, in London, he delivered a lecture designed to make clear his idea. Next morning the London morning papers printed amazingly confused reports of it, and to set himself right Shaw wrote a letter to the *Daily News* containing 12 assertions, which, like the 95 theses Luther nailed upon the church door at Wittenberg, he desired should make known the substance of his argument. Here they are:

" 1. That the idolatry of Shakespeare which prevails now existed in his own time, and got on the nerve of Ben Jonson.

" 2. That Shakespeare was not an illiterate poaching laborer who came up to London to be a horseboy, but a gentleman with all the social pretensions of our higher *bourgeoisie*.

" 3. That Shakespeare, when he became an actor, was not a rogue and a vagabond, but a member and part proprietor of a regular company, using, by permission, a

nobleman's name as its patron, and holding itself as exclusively above the casual barnstormer as a Harley Street consultant holds himself above a man with a sarsaparilla stall.

"4. That Shakespeare's aim in business was to make money enough to acquire land in Stratford, and to retire as a country gentleman with a coat of arms and a good standing in the county; and that this was not the ambition of a *parvenu,* but the natural course for a member of the highly respectable, though temporarily impecunious, family of the Shakespeares.

"5. That Shakespeare found that the only thing that paid in the theater was romantic nonsense, and that when he was forced by this to produce one of the most effective samples of romantic nonsense in existence—a feat which he performed easily and well—he publicly disclaimed any responsibility for its pleasant and cheap falsehood by borrowing the story and throwing it in the face of the public with the phrase 'As You Like It.'

"6. That when Shakespeare used that phrase he meant exactly what he said, and that the phrase 'What You Will,' which he applied to 'Twelfth Night,' meaning 'Call it what you please,' is not, in Shakespearean or any other English, the equivalent of the perfectly unambiguous and penetratingly simple phrase 'As You Like It.'

"7. That Shakespeare tried to make the public accept real studies of life and character in—for instance

—'Measure for Measure' and 'All's Well That Ends Well'; and that the public would not have them, and remains of the same mind still, preferring a fantastic sugar doll, like Rosalind, to such serious and dignified studies of women as Isabella and Helena.

"8. That the people who spoil paper and waste ink by describing Rosalind as a perfect type of womanhood are the descendants of the same blockheads whom Shakespeare, with the coat of arms and the lands in Warwickshire in view, had to please when he wrote plays as they liked them.

"9. Not, as has been erroneously stated, that I could write a better play than 'As You Like It,' but that I actually have written much better ones, and in fact, never wrote anything, and never intend to write anything, half so bad in matter. (In manner and art nobody can write better than Shakespeare, because, carelessness apart, he did the thing as well as it can be done within the limits of human faculty.)

"10. That to anyone with the requisite ear and command of words, blank verse, written under the amazingly loose conditions which Shakespeare claimed, with full liberty to use all sorts of words, colloquial, technical, rhetorical, and even obscurely technical, to indulge in the most far-fetched ellipses, and to impress ignorant people with every possible extremity of fantasy and affectation, is the easiest of all known modes of literary expression, and that this is why whole oceans of dull bom-

bast and drivel have been emptied on the head of England since Shakespeare's time in this form by people who could not have written 'Box and Cox' to save their lives. Also (this on being challenged) that I can write blank verse myself more swiftly than prose, and that, too, of full Elizabethan quality plus the Shakespearian sense of the absurdity of it as expressed in the lines of Ancient Pistol. What is more, that I have done it, published it, and had it performed on the stage with huge applause.

"11. That Shakespeare's power lies in his enormous command of word music, which gives fascination to his most blackguardly repartees and sublimity to his hollowest platitudes.

"12. That Shakespeare's weakness lies in his complete deficiency in that highest sphere of thought, in which poetry embraces religion, philosophy, morality, and the bearing of these on communities, which is sociology. That his characters have no religion, no politics, no conscience, no hope, no convictions of any sort. That there are, as Ruskin pointed out, no heroes in Shakespeare. That his test of the worth of life is the vulgar hedonic test and that since life cannot be justified by this or any other external test, Shakespeare comes out of his reflective period a vulgar pessimist, oppressed with a logical demonstration that life is not worth living, and only surpassing Thackeray in respect to being fertile enough, instead of repeating 'Vanitas vanitatum' at sec-

ond hand to work the futile doctrine differently and better in such passages as 'Out, out, brief candle.'"

These twelve articles merely serve to arouse a new storm of discussion and Shaw profited much thereby in the advertising it gave him. In May, 1905, the controversy had reached such a height that J. B. Fagan, a young English dramatist, wrote a burlesque about it. The piece was called "Shakespeare vs. Shaw" and was presented at the Haymarket Theater, London. The scene of the one act was a courtroom, in which the case between the two playwrights was being tried. James Welsh, Miss Winifred Emery, Cyril Maude, and other prominent players were in the cast and the little *revue* evidently made a fair success. At all events, its presentation was a rather significant thing. Few dramatists, in their lifetimes, see plays written about them.

THE END